

P.O. angl. 203 to 1

<36623843630017

<36623843630017

Bayer. Staatsbibliothek

THE
LIFE OF A LOVER.

VOL. I.

S. Hamilton, Printer, Shoe-Lane, Fleet-Street.

19 B6

1

THE
LIFE OF A LOVER.

VOL. I.

By JAMES JOYCE, Author of "Dubliners" and "Ulysses".

1888

THE
LIFE OF A LOVER.

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

BY SOPHIA LEE.

Honour, that spark of the celestial fire
Which above nature makes mankind aspire,
Ennobles the rude passions of our frame.
* * * * *
The richest treasure of a gen'rous breast,
Which gives the stamp and standard to the rest.
MARQ. OF HALIFAX.

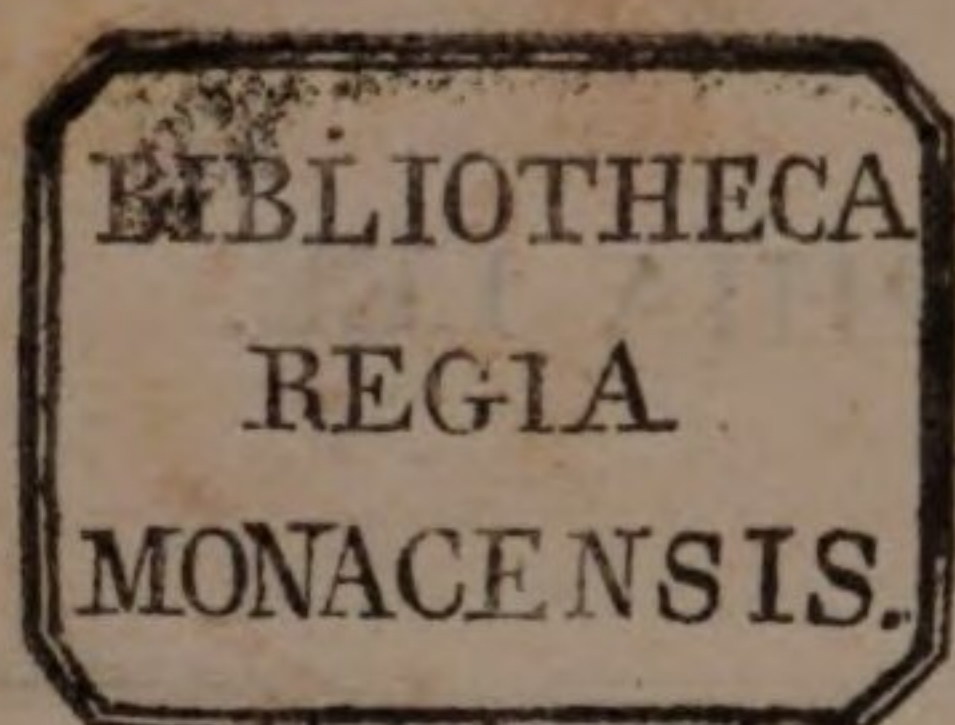
IN SIX VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR G. & J. ROBINSON,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.
1804.

LIFE OF A LOVER

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS



IN SIX VOLUMES

VOL. I

LONDON:
PRINTED BY G. & W. JOHNSON,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1801.

P R E F A C E.

WHEN the comedy of the Chapter of Accidents was first represented, I was inexperienced enough to imagine that I might submit the little product of my fancy to the public, without appearing personally at its bar; but I soon discovered that the very success to which I owed so many friends, necessarily created me an equal number of enemies. Rendered timid from this conviction, as well as from my sex, I am now anxious to interest the candid, and to deprecate the severe. The latter could hardly, I think, point out, in this voluminous performance, a fault which is unknown to the author; and

should the former ascribe to it any charm, it is equally probable she may have discovered that.

A work which was planned and written at the early age when imagination takes the lead of reason, and the heart occasionally over-rules both, will necessarily want the harmony of subject and style which alone ensures the approbation of the judicious. Yet every season of life has a charm peculiar to itself; and we may modify away that of youth, without supplying its place. It may be with intellect as it is with sunshine—the beauty of the day is past when the beams become powerful enough to warm us.—In short, we can be young only once in our lives; and all the impressions of that season will have a lasting influence over hearts of sensibility.

At the time when I produced a frail Cecilia, I was so severely censured by the rigid moralists who directed the newspapers, that I should have thought it due to myself to show immediately, by printing these volumes, that I had considered both sides of the question, had not some prudential reasons, no way necessary to be detailed, made me consign to my desk the Cecilia whom I now present to the public: yet this is the work to which my biographer refers in the brief sketch he gave of my early life, and which he perused long since in manuscript.

I shall not apologise for having indulged the bias of my own heart in tracing that of woman through almost every tender and silent suffering which is a sad distinction of my sex. I well

know, that neither philosophy, wit, nor even ridicule, can stifle in nature its first and strongest feeling. When sentiment is impassioned by situation, it will always find its way to the heart: tears will then as readily attend the unfortunate as smiles the absurd, or rather at the same moment blend, and, by the happy versatility of the human character,

“Stream like wat’ry sunbeams through a cloud.”

During the many years which these volumes have remained in my closet, such changes in nations, manners, and principles have been made, as defy all calculation. The revolutionary system has pervaded literature, even in the humblest of its classes—novels! The rights and character of woman have been placed in lights by which the delicacy of the sex has often

been wholly sacrificed to the assertion of a hardy equality with man, that, even if it assured to us an increase of esteem, would cause an equal deduction of tenderness: a bad exchange for the sex upon the great scale. It was, I own, my girlish intention, to draw in my heroine a female, possessing, without a masculine mind or manners, some decided opinions, which, at the time when this work was written, would have been thought new and bold. I have had leisure to compare these opinions with those of other authors; but as I never found myself inclined to come nearer to the late system, I have left Cecilia Rivers as she came first from my pen.

The sturdy race of female argum-
tators who have sprung up of late years,
raise a cry against that by which they live

—romance ! and every character which dares to rise above the level of common life, is by them cast out of the pale of existence. But I have lived long enough in the world to be convinced, that it is as difficult to go beyond the merits as the faults of mortality. However chimerical the pictures drawn by authors may appear to persons who move in a narrow circle, those who take a wider range in life will not fail to discover, both among the living and the dead, some informed and elevated beings to whose merits imagination cannot add.

Having thus endeavoured to recommend both myself and my work to all my readers, courteous and uncourteous, I will only trouble them with another observation : As an author cannot be certain of pleasing any human being but

himself, he must be weak indeed who loses his own approbation, when that may be eventually the sole reward. Yet do I not undervalue reputation because I will not court it: perhaps I only affect this philosophic composure to enjoy more fully the applause of the public, should I be happy enough to obtain it.

Ah! remember, readers, that Genius, like some rare plants, requires those rays, which scattered ripen all other productions of nature, to be concentrated, ere its fruits can be brought to perfection.

himself, he must be weak indeed who
loses his own approbation, when that
may be eventually the sole reward. I
do not understand the reputation business. I
will not count it: perhaps I only affect
this philosophic composure to enjoy more
fully the applause of the public, which
I too happily choose to obtain in

Ah! remember, reader, that Goethe
like some rare plants, requires those rays,
which scattered upon all other produc-
tions of nature, to be concentrated, ere its
fruits can be brought to perfection.

THE
L I F E
OF A
L O V E R.

LETTER I.
TO MISS CECILIA RIVERS.

Sunning.

THE heart of your Amelia flies, my dear, to embrace and bid you welcome to your native land! nor would parsimony keep my poor little person at home, did not prudence, and maternal love, bind me to the cradle of my babe; for, though I know Susan to be affectionate and watchful, I am not able to think her as much so as myself; and my darlings have the whooping-cough.

This long, long year has at length elapsed, and you have quitted France: it seems quite an age since we parted!—Me-thinks you and I ought formerly to have agreed, like the two friends in the Tatler, to have but one husband; and yet, well as I love my Cecilia, I think I should not have voluntarily adopted that expedient: in truth, the only plan I have ever been able to recommend, is to marry her to just such another inimitable creature as heaven in its bounty has bestowed upon me, and get him inducted to her father's living. I hate to pass that dear well-known parsonage—it now looks quite forlorn and melancholy. Dr. M. has lopped all the luxuriant jessamin and woodbine that used to half cover our pretty little music-room; nor do I think the casements have been opened since you left the country.

I flatter myself that this epistle will find you comfortably at home with Mr. William Forrester's family. I am certain his good little wife, as well as himself, will

gladly embrace the first opportunity to return the cordial welcome which Mr. Rivers so often gave them at St. I---. Had I not known their tempers, I will own, neither my pride, nor my affection, would have permitted me to recommend my Cecilia to take up her abode in Coventry-street.

And now, my sweet girl, to the consideration of your present project: it is, in some respects, a good one; but, alas! your youth, and natural as well as acquired advantages, will prove heavy drawbacks. What eagle-eyed wife, or over-anxious mother, will choose to receive into her family the lovely, the accomplished, the interesting, Miss Rivers? You will have occasion for all your discretion and sweetness of temper, to reconcile you to the mortifications and disappointments to which you must often inevitably be exposed. Yet what state on earth is free from disquiet? Reason and religion can alone qualify to individuals the bitter potion each must take,

by analysing the weaknesses and prejudices which add nausea to the draught. That superior mode of thinking and acting peculiar to my Cecilia, will dispose her ever to consider the fair side of the prospect; and, despite of all the misanthropes on earth, I will maintain that the mind is the only source and seat of happiness. We may truly say, that the wretch who cherishes a fretful repining spirit,

“ Benighted walks beneath the noon-day sun,
Himself is his own dungeon.”

Though suddenly thrown far below the rank you have been accustomed to fill (for, alas! you never held that which you are calculated to adorn), you have resolutely avoided the humiliation of dependent gentility, by daring to apply those talents which you have delighted to cultivate. How many of our sex, accustomed to affluence, and habituated to indolence, are suddenly victims to a cruel reverse of fortune! nor know, by a timely

exertion, how to preserve themselves from even the extreme of degradation. The daughters of men in liberal professions are most exposed to become thus destitute; and, to all the common evils of life, they superadd a fatal delicacy of person and manners, which must necessarily double their sufferings.

Indeed, my dearest, however I may admire your spirited conduct, I cannot help severely censuring your father, for educating his children so unsuitably to his own circumstances, and their future views: thousands of young women have been ruined by as erroneous an indulgence on the part of their parents. Mr. Rivers might, it is true, reasonably imagine daughters so richly gifted as his would marry highly; but, alas! the dear man loved you both so well, that he could never resolve to give you a chance, or let either quit the village he inhabited. The only great match within your reach you refused, as well as your sister; and I am half inclined to quarrel with your roman-

tic delicacy, since I should otherwise still enjoy your society.

Yet how, even in the most trying circumstances, has my Cecilia acted? Ah! how far beyond her years has been her judgement--her resolution! Hardly bestowing a tear on her own fate, as soon as she had power to dry the floods that fell for her father's, how firmly did she make up her mind to encounter, even in the bloom of youth, the world, and exert her utmost diligence to qualify herself for the arduous part which she thought it wise to take!

There seems hardly any other choice for the delicate and unfortunate of our sex, than private tuition; yet that too often proves either an irksome or unpleasant occupation: let not then my friend forget that another home is ever open to her; and the arms of friendship and frugality outstretched to receive her back again. Had pride no share, my Cecilia, in the obstinate refusal you have hitherto given to this proposal? Ah, no! I will more fairly judge that generous sensibility which

will not allow you to interfere with the views of another; that feels more than it sees, and, by an intuitive judgement, is ever in the right.

If the fear of incommoding or embarrassing us induced you to decline the offer we jointly made you, it was dictated by a false delicacy: the person who adds much to the expence of a little establishment, must be more luxurious than my Cecilia; and, though Mr. Forrester's income is too narrow to allow his family many indulgences, it certainly may afford them all the common comforts of life; nor have they been used to any thing beyond these. I need hardly remind you, that my Charles loves you almost as well as I do; nor of the charge your lamented father verbally gave to him. Should your present plan, therefore, fail to make you happy, wonder not if he should keep his word with that invaluable father, and peremptorily withdraw you from grief, obloquy, or insult.

I hardly know whether I can honestly say that I wish you success, since your

failure would restore you to a heart that has not yet learnt to live without you: the other insolent sex may ridicule female friendships as much as they please, but I have seen many outlive their boasted rational attachments.

I am not surprised at your general judgement of monastic associations: a mind of sensibility, tinctured with melancholy, (the only just cause, *entre nous*, for seeking such a chilling asylum as a convent,) can hardly fail to like the habitual yet gloomy enthusiasm of its modes; nor do I condemn such institutions, but the manner in which they are conducted. Women, who are either by choice or necessity thrown upon the world in the middle of life, naturally look out for some retired and tranquil home, where other sad stragglers, not more fortunate than themselves, may unite in supplying, as far as situation will allow, those dear and tender ties which circumstances have robbed them all of: for such is the infection of social life, that no human being, who has once tasted its

sweets, can endure to resign them. Monastic institutions, therefore, if free from vows of perpetual celibacy, or total seclusion, would be a great advantage to single women. On their present footing, they are absolutely a moral evil.

As your acceptation in life, my dear, must a good deal depend on your appearance, (for many, many narrow souls measure merit by that standard!) let it not be too economical; it will be an erroneous humility to undervalue yourself: some dignity of carriage is likewise necessary, to obviate the objection of your youth, and impress both your pupils and their parents with that respect which alone will induce them to render a subordinate situation tolerable. "Make something of yourself, and the world will make something of you," is a common but useful adage. Though pride in the extreme is a most disgusting fault, in the medium you will find it a mighty useful one.

I shall be all impatience till I know your destination. Little Cecy kisses

my letter all over, hearing it is to her godmother. My Charles recommends you to him who has promised to become a parent to the fatherless; and to his are added the no less ardent prayers of your

AMELIA FORRESTER.

P.S. I charge you write both regularly and minutely. What joy have I in life equal to your letters! Should I be less exact in answering, allow both for my domestic anxieties and occupations: well you know my heart is too much attached to you ever voluntarily to remain silent.

I am sometimes teased to death at the assembly with inquiries for you from the gentlemen. The ladies, poor things, I can excuse, if less importunate. Your quondam lover Sir Thomas, you find, has taken pity on Miss Dorothy Chetwood, and draws in one yoke with her. Your father's successor has paid the parsonage but one short visit; nor was that needful, to show the neighbourhood what it

lost in Mr. Rivers. Here is a fine budget of scandal! But letters from the country are generally termed so; and the very essence of that of a woman, the wits say, may always be found in the postscript.

LETTER II.

TO MRS. FORRESTER.

London.

YOUR letter, my Amelia, was the first pleasure I tasted in this gay and multitudinous metropolis. Mr. Forrester met and conducted me to his house, where not even yourself could have been more cordially welcomed.

My own Amelia, how animated, how glowing, how undiminished, is your friendship! my heart feels and melts before it, but my resolution is unaltered: were that heart mean enough for dependence, it were unworthy a higher state; more especially as I have just reached the period

of my life when every faculty being arrived at maturity, I am, if ever, able to provide for myself. Shall I, then, resolve to deprive your little and increasing family of the few advantages which their parents can give them? No, my dear, my estimable friends, the comforts you possess, long may you enjoy! And may I want such for ever, when I consent to lessen them!

Although I know that it is your partial attachment to me which renders your judgement of my father's conduct severe, pardon me if I cannot bear to hear it censured: his virtues were so sublime and holy, that they in a manner overshadowed his failings, at least in my eyes. Destined to resign, in the prime of her days, the only woman whom he ever adored, how could he resolve to tear from his bosom, or drive out into the world, the two children through whom she yet to him existed! He had not, when death hastily called him, reached that period of life when he ought to have expected the awful visitor.

Indeed, my dear, if he hoped that fortune might favour his children in wedlock, never did he suffer the idea to reach us; never for a moment did he warp the line of rectitude, or bid our souls incline to any thing but merit; nor were his example and his precepts lost upon us.

The sacred conviction, that misfortune can never have a dangerous tendency, when the mind is guarded by reason, and supported by religion, reconciled him to the fate which he had not any cause to imagine himself so near. Even now his wise, his pious admonitions dwell on my sense. No, my beloved father, hear me, in turn, though in the grave! hear me declare that they were not given in vain! I will live and die worthy a tenderness which at this moment of precious recollection fills my soul with sorrow, and my eyes with tears!

Sir Thomas's marriage does not in the least surprise me. I lived too near him to be ignorant of his real character: long since did I discover that the sole idea he

had formed of happiness was the hope of being envied. In vain did you praise his mansion--his park--his stud--himself; if all these were not thought superior to those of Lord M-----, he remained a disappointed man. I know not what caprice gave me a temporary fashion in the neighbourhood. Lord M----- himself, perhaps--as he often danced with me, and was an idolater of my voice. To step before that nobleman, and call me his, induced the overture of marriage, which Sir Thomas made me sensible he thought very flattering to a poor parson's daughter. It is whims as absurd as this that alone could dispose of so many flirts; and Sir Thomas now only marries Miss Dorothy because she had art enough to persuade him that the persons he most hates and envies were dying for her. With such a man, could your Cecilia for one moment hope to be happy! Of all the various titles comprised in that of husband, the master alone would have been his; and vainly must I have sighed for, and sought, the lover, instruc-

tor, and friend.---To own the whole truth, I might with a safer conscience have married his house, coach, and park, than the owner of them all ;---for I was then young enough, and, let me add, weak enough, to look with a longing eye on the vanities of life. My father (unlike the idea you have formed of him) represented the advantages of Sir Thomas's fortune, without hiding his deficiency of merit ; and then, conjuring me to think well ere I answered, he ordered me to give that answer to my lover, and never say one word more to him on the subject. A confidence so implicit not only delighted my heart, but made it pant to show its gratitude and right feeling. I had a thousand times more distinction in my own eyes in refusing the Baronet, than all his consequence could ever have procured me in those of other people. Whatever my father thought or wished, he never by word or look reproved me for thus deciding. I was, as you know, soon superseded in ton by my sister, whose charms carried off Sir Thomas, as

well as my other admirers ; but the fame of her prudery usually foreran that of her beauty ; and our haughty neighbour could not risk a second mortification from the same insignificant family, or else I might have stood a chance of being his sister-in-law ; for it is plain, by the sacrifices Marianne makes to obtain the goods of this world, that she values them more than I do.

You see what an opinion I had of the violent passion of Sir Thomas, about which I was so teased. Really, one would have supposed that he meant to hang or drown himself for notoriety, which was the only object of his wishes. Strange, that, among the men who have hitherto professed a passion for me, I could never find one actuated by real love. Do all that sex marry from vanity or ambition ? Ah, no ! Mr. Forrester and my Amelia taught me early to think and feel more justly : though, at intervals, my pride is a little piqued at a conviction that ought to satisfy my heart---since heaven forbid I should wish to in-

spire a passion which I could not return ; and I certainly never yet felt more than a preference, which is too innocent a liking to be dangerous.

Notwithstanding I have read and heard so much of the bustle, gaiety, and delights of London, I had formed no adequate idea of either. I languish to see a thousand things, yet find the fatigue of visiting one in a day more than I am equal to ! I returned from the play as tired as I used to find myself after I had been dancing half the night. Mrs. Forrester is a Londoner, you know ; and too proud of that honour, not to drag me through the routine of sights. I shall hardly escape from her hands, while there is a show unvisited, or I have a sense unimpaired.

All this, however, has not diverted me from the main object ; and we have drawn up an advertisement, as from a private governess, which is to be in the newspapers to-morrow. I hope it will succeed ; for its insertion has cost me a little fortune.

I conclude, that, if my aunt had made any inquiries for the mean-spirited animal who chose to depend upon her own exertions, you would have informed me: I shall not, of course, call at her door to be affronted. Were she not rich, I should think submission my duty; but, as it is, I know she would impute any attention on my part only to an interested motive; and I had rather she thought me proud than mean. She never loved my poor father; and takes that occasion to publish her aversion, when any mind of common feeling would forget it for ever. I pity Marianne; but I cannot avoid blaming her, too. She now and then wrote to me in France; but with her usual coldness, and in terms as prim and unmeaning as her epistles from school. I am sure, I have reason to wish that she may gratify her aunt's vanity, and marry highly!

LETTER III.

TO MRS. FORRESTER.

—, 1771.

O that I had you here, my Amelia! to share with me in a good laugh at all the extraordinary epistles which this one little advertisement has produced: we might employ a long winter's-evening in deciphering them, even had we Ptolemy's librarian to expound the various hieroglyphics.

Here is one from an elderly lady in a retired situation, who wants a young person to entertain her; and confines her inquiries to my singing and dancing. I wish she may not be a strolling manager in disguise; for she would have my answer directed to Y. Z., at the Shakespeare's-Head. Then there is a sickly gentleman, in the country, who modestly advises a smart

girl of my age never to be a servant, when I could be a mistress! assuring me, that he has a mighty pretty house, and is of an accommodating temper, if I can bear confinement and love picquet! He solicits an interview, or, if my delicacy militates against that, an exact description of my person, together with my real age. The first of these delectable epistles is in a huge round hand, and the last of a curious orthography. Take these, as mere samples of my numerous absurd correspondents.

One, however, more rational, was found among the many, directing me to call on Lady Grantham, in the city. Mr. Forrester knew Sir Joshua to be a banker of reputation and fortune; and it was agreed that I should comply with the requisition in the letter. Recollecting your sage advice, as to dress, I came down very handsomely attired, to the great dismay of your poor sister-in-law; who at length, with much hesitation, was brought to acknowledge that I could have no hope of

succeeding with a city lady, if she saw I was dressed as fine as herself. Up marched I again, and put on a light-gray Irish poplin; gracing my chin with one of Mrs. Forrester's own hoods, to make me, as she said, look grave---alias, frightful! and, being supplied by her with a muff, to give me consequence, I was now pronounced very properly dressed, and stepped into a hackney coach, esquired by your good brother.

The novelty of the situation so wholly occupied my thoughts, that I only knew I was come to Broad-street by the stopping of the vehicle. Ah! how useless is our understanding on a thousand occasions! Mine, every moment, told me that I need hardly dread the lady I was going to see, since it was very unlikely that she should equal in mind and manners many with whom I had often mixed. The awkwardness of being announced in an inferior light---of becoming my own historian and panegyrist;---a thousand nameless, but overwhelming, sensations,--made

every gift of nature at that moment a mere burden; and gladly would I have compounded for rejection, unseen and uncatechised. Lady Grantham was, however, at home; and I was ushered into a 'drawing-room, where she was already sitting. Mrs. Forrester had certainly not laboured in vain to give me consequence; for my appearance seemed no less to impress the lady than the footman, who employed himself busily in removing two lazy lap-dogs from the arm-chair on the vacant side of the fire, while she was courtesying and apologising: but the sight of the note I presented, which was that sent to me in her name, rectified her error. She instantaneously dismissed the man; and guiding me, by a haughty glance of her eye, to a seat so far from the fire that I found my worthy friend's muff very commodious, she began to examine the note, and I to survey her dress. That of the city ladies we have often heard ridiculed; but it was only now that I could know with what reason. Laden with expen-

sive fineries, poor Lady Grantham gave a lamentable proof of want of taste. She had been dressing for dinner; and the sacque she wore was loaded with French trimmings enough for three!--while her head, of an enormous height, was frosted alike by art and nature, and adorned with flowers;--her whole figure forming, from its rotundity, an absolute conical mountain, the lower part covered with roses, and the summit with snow. Having perused the note, she did not hesitate to turn in silence towards your poor blushing Cecilia, of whose outside she took as exact a survey as ever I had done of hers; then, rudely addressing me,--

“You are the parson that advertised in this here paper--are you, Miss--what's your name?”

I bowed.

“Pray, was you ever out in the world before?”

“I returned from France, Madam, only last week.”

“ Ay! that was right enough! all genteel governesses, now-a-days, come from France. And, pray, what do you purtend to larn young ladies?”

“ To speak and write English and French; all kinds of elegant work; embroidery, and tambour. I know something, too, of Italian; and have been thought a little skilled in music.”

“ Pray, Miss, do you live with your parents?”

“ My mother I lost, Madam, in my infancy; and my father, who was a clergyman, something more than a year ago. In him, unhappily, I lost both the best protection and prospects.”

“ Hum!” cried she, as I wept, with inexpressible humiliation——“ A great loss! a monstrous great loss, indeed!—How old may you be, Miss?”

“ Just one-and-twenty, Madam.”

“ And what terms do you ax?”

“ Forty pounds a-year, Madam, and a chamber to myself; with such consideration in the family as my education,

and, I hope, my conduct, will entitle me to."

"These here terms, Miss, are purdigious high! My daaghter (to spell as she pronounces) is quite accomplished—completely edicated;—but she is too young to come out yet. She was six years at a great boarding-school, within a stone's-throw of our country-house; and her governess says she talks French better than herself. You will have nothing, in a manner, to teach: indeed, you will be more my companion, as well as hers. I should hardly think of such a useless kind of parson, but to be in the fashion; for every body has a French governess now, I think!—Can you do plain-work neatly?"

"In a household manner: I never made that a study."

"Fifty times more useful, Miss, though, than all your imbrydery and tom bores! We always makes all our linen at home; and, if you come to me, you must lend a helping hand—beside working my things, and Jemmy's waistcoats."

“I shall never object to becoming useful to your Ladyship, in any proper manner.”

“So you had need, Miss---what’s your name!--Forty pounds a-year keeps many a poor parson and his family:--not that I should begrudge it, had you been a Frenchwoman born! Lady Grimstead, my next-door neighbour, has got a real French governess for her daughter, who can’t speak one word of English; and they only gives her forty guineas! However, you seem a genteel conformable-kind of body; so, for once, I will be a little extravagant!--As to a chamber to yourself, I have not a spare one in my house; but you will sleep with my daughter, and always dine and sup with the family, as well as go with us to the willa every Saturday.--Who am I to ax about you?”

“Lady Browne was my father’s old friend, and has known me from my childhood. She lives at Kensington, and permits this reference.”

“ Well ! I will call of her, when I go to the willa, on Saturday ; and let you know when I wish you to come here.”

Lady Grantham having thus concluded this original harangue, which I have given you verbatim, rang, and ordered my pupil to appear. But, alas ! very different was her address, from that her mother had spoken of ! This accomplished, completely-educated, boarding-school miss, is as raw and unpolished as if she was now beginning her career in one ! She has, unluckily, just reached that size and age which makes an overgrown girl or an unfinished woman ; and was dressed in a manner that showed every disadvantage in the worst point of view---flat heels, a short frock, and a cap, with bells made of ribbon hanging to her shoulder. I addressed her politely in French. She coloured, and fidgetted with her feet, as if she had St. Vitus's dance ; but not one word passed her lips in answer. This irritated her lady-mother ; and, at her command, the poor girl at length uttered a few words of

a most unintelligible jargon. She seemed, however, humble, and tearful. On rising to take my leave, I was honoured with only a nod from Mamma, but a courtesy, low even to reverence, from Miss.

This is, it seems, a mighty happy outset in this complex world; and I am hourly congratulated on the occasion by your good sister and brother. Mr. Forrester served his time in Sir Joshua's neighbourhood, and has given me the family history. Lady G——, he tells me, was many years housekeeper to the Knight; and mother of both a son and this daughter, ere Sir Joshua repented of his sins, and married. But, alas! if he once repented the sin, he has never ceased to repent the atonement; for she is a high-spirited, insolent wife, though neither an unkind mistress, nor unsociable woman. Sir Joshua has amassed an immense property; and would, perhaps, manage a spendthrift son better, but that his mother reigns over the strong box, as well as over her spouse, and supplies all the young man's extravagance.

All this, however, is nothing to me. I have only to fulfil a very moderate duty, show a respectful attention, and seek, in books, friendship, and my own heart, indulgence. Endued with a quick perception of pleasure, and a decision of character that renders nothing in the whole world indifferent to me, I can never want employment for my thoughts or faculties. It is true, my heart demands enjoyment; but my reason tells me, that can be found only in the tried, the valued few. I never was able to fancy I saw a friend in every stranger, nor ever found a traitor in a friend: indeed, I have observed that those who complain so incessantly of the baseness of mankind, are such as place a blind confidence in all they meet, and consider friendship to be as general as speech.

Lady Grantham seems an original, and, if all her family prove so, it will amuse me to sketch their characters. You shall have the benefit of my observations. I depend on being accepted, you see: but Lady Browne was always so partial to

me, that I only fear her saying too much in my favour.

We are all in a bustle to see Elfrida; so I must seal this, or discompose my hostess. Adieu, dearest Amelia! Think of me only when the recollection gives you pleasure, and know yourself that dearest to

Your own

CECILIA RIVERS.

P.S. All is arranged; and I go, on Monday, to my city home.

LETTER IV.

TO MRS. FORRESTER.

I HAVE been now a week in possession of my new dignity; and already begin to entertain the unlucky idea, that it is not so easy to be happy, as, in the vanity of my heart, I would fain have ima-

gined. Yes, your Charles was, I doubt, quite in the right, when he told us, that those born to struggle with the world could hardly be too soon launched into it, ere their trembling sensibility fearfully shrinks from every touch. It is in vain to suppose that we can ever reduce our expectations to a level with our fortune; since, however low we may bring the former, the latter will be found yet lower. I cannot but conclude it to be impossible that I should long remain with this family; though, to appearance, I am now a reigning favourite. Alas! I cannot but see that they all are narrow in ideas, and feel that they are indelicate in manners. It is opulence, alone, which renders them supportable; and to that they so continually refer, as to awaken contempt in those over whom they affect superiority. Lady Grantham was completely depicted in my last, as well as Miss. Sir Joshua is a snug sober cit; content to endure all his wife's lectures, so she will only permit him to sit down to supper in his velvet

nightcap, and smoke a pipe in the parlour after it. Mr. Grantham is the principle of action in the whole family: he has attained years of maturity---I will not say discretion; and is, in his own sense of the word, a perfect fine gentleman. Although as far from handsome as amiable, he expects you to think him both: execrates all business: soils our clothes with dirty boots; disdains any apology: and, to add to his perfections, is followed by a kindred race of puppies, who snatch your bread and butter out of your hand, if you are not very watchful: nay, in truth, one of his favourites very nearly devoured my poor hand and all; when, as if I were not already hurt or frightened enough, their gallant master squeezed it till I could hardly avoid screaming out; and then, throwing his arms around me, kissed me no less rudely; laughing, and saying he liked to "take the bloom from the plum."

Mr. Grantham is, however, his mother's idol; and a thousand such imperti-

nences she considers only as proofs of his spirit and ton; nor has she an idea that a young woman, in a subordinate situation, is not born to amuse and conform to the will of all who are above her. For this youth I must sing, whether I am inclined to it or not; with him I must dance, if he chooses it: in short, I hardly know in what, where he is concerned, I ought to have, in his lady-mother's opinion, a voice of my own. It must be owned, that she makes herself a slave to the wretched coxcomb's humours; and so far is he from being grateful for her weak and boundless indulgence, that he gives himself a thousand sulky airs if she do not even prevent his wishes as to money. She often strokes his ugly cheek, with an air of tender humility, and presents to him the bank-bills which she scolds his father out of. To all her entreaties that he would not ruin his constitution by drinking, I have seen this dear Jemmy reply with an insolent nod and her health in a bumper.

The individual of the family with whom I pass most of my time, is far the most supportable being among them; yet her ideas of pleasure reach no farther than pampering Canary birds, and filling her pockets with stolen fruit; while her sense of pain is confined to a scolding from the gardener, or a frown from her mother.

You shall have a full picture of our expedition to the willa, as Lady Grantham always calls her country-house. After filling the boot with provisions, and the seats with best clothes (that we might, I presume, feed, as well as appear, like Christians, according to her Ladyship's phrase), the summons for our entering the coach arrived.--Sir Joshua and Lady; Miss and your Cecilia opposite; as well as a fat housekeeper, two bird-cages, one lap-dog, three band-boxes, my Lady's cane and parasol, and Sir Joshua's best hat and fishing-tackle. Thus stowed, you may judge whether we had much room to spare!--It is well that the dress I wore on

Saturday would serve me on Sunday, since not an old glove could I have gained admission for. After a charming dusty drive, we were set down, as the evening closed, at a house, large enough, and substantially, but well, furnished. With the morning I was summoned to mount into the lantern, and examine the fine prospect. This was much to my dissatisfaction; as I was obliged to follow Sir Joshua, and allow his son to follow me; but I saw that it would be vain to remonstrate. While the family were descanting on the various dull flats comprehended in the view, I cast an eye on the home prospect. The mansion stands in a court-yard, close by the great road, which at once amuses us with an eternal rotation of carriages, and as eternal clouds of dust. The garden lies chiefly on one side, and is a curious olio of the ancient and modern! Toward the road it is bordered by arches of yew-trees, with which the dust is so incorporated, that the possibility of their resuming even their own dingy green is a thing out

of all hope. Within these triumphal arches is a well cropped field, which the owners are pleased to call a shrubbery, bordered with expensive exotics in leaden pots, and a serpentine walk, of sulky contrivance, for only one person can patrol in it at a time.

To the kitchen-garden we are led by two more magnificent arches; though composed of no other than the mournful materials I have mentioned the longer range in the front to be formed of.

Two stone vases mark the gate; where Lady Grantham, with grief, informed me, once grew two swans, that by her account Leda would have admired; but that a ruthless gardener, knowing how much she valued them, one day, in her absence, and on purpose to plague her, cut them off, in the bloom, as one may say, of their days.

The bell now summoned us to a neighbouring church; whither Lady Grantham made her entrée modishly dressed enough; but, alas! her poor daughter followed, arrayed in a brocade, under

her frock, at least as old as the yew arches in the garden. Such tremendous leaves of faded yellow-green! interspersed with flowers of no less magnitude, nor gaudy colours, than some holyhocks that ornament your garden.

On seeing the poor girl out of humour (as she well might be), my Lady sagely observed, with a wink at me, that the first gown a girl could expect to choose, was her wedding one.—Could I fail to smile at this?—as if it were necessary to quicken the restless desire of womanhood that actuates almost all who approach it.

The interval between church and dinner we passed, amid sun and dust, in the aforementioned shrubbery; and in the evening drove to drink tea at the Castle Inn, Richmond; after which we walked in the Royal Gardens. I had great difficulty to avoid the honour of mounting Mr. Grant-ham's phaeton: but, finding me inexorable, he declared he could not be so cursed vulgar as to be seen with his sister; of

course, we all went in the coach, and the squire solus. Night brought us home; and the rest of our time was spent in the gay recapitulation of the past; while, to my astonishment, each individual seemed as perfectly happy, as reason, tenderness, and nature, could ever make you or me! Yet, however my restrained spirits may tempt me thus to satirize the vulgar and the weak, let me humbly adore that gracious Providence which gives to each temper the species of enjoyment peculiar to itself.--Believe me, my dear, these people would have as little taste for yours and mine, as we have for theirs.

On Monday we returned, in the same vehicle and manner, but that part of our baggage was exchanged for the more fragrant one of myrtles, flowers, and the last fruits of autumn.

This mode of life, though uniform and uninteresting, is not marked by impropriety; nor have I a right to except to any part of it; but I find one inconvenience which I know not how to remedy, and feel

it would render me ridiculous to complain of: I mean an insolent overbearing kind of gallantry on the part of Mr. Grantham. Do not tax me with prudery, because my nature draws a strict line between the sexes: never ought it, in my opinion, to give way, unless to the man of your choice: and the woman who allows any liberties to him whom she can never love, robs herself of an indulgence, and the chosen being of a distinction, when she finds him whom she can. I would not, by this, have you understand that this young man goes any unwarrantable lengths; but I am, I would be, a mere country-girl, on all points of this kind. I abhor the meaning stare---the rude squeeze---the officious appropriation of one's hands, one's person, on all occasions.---Many women, no less chaste than myself, endure all this, I well know, without disgust: but reserve, to say nothing of its necessity in subordinate situations, is so much the character of my heart, that only love could dispel it. I have, more than once,

already, felt, severely felt, the difference of meeting that encroaching sex on the footing of equality, when one checks a man by a glance, or inferiority.--Oh! my dear! how ought we to feel for young women, then, in servitude! since narrow-minded men, of every rank and description, are empowered to insult them: and from whom can they hope redress?--Self powerfully awakens one's sympathy. I, however, have a right to keep this youth at a distance: and I will do so, or get out of his reach.

I sometimes think that this is his way of being witty; but, even if he were serious, it would be much the same thing to me, for I would not marry such a low minded being were he the heir of a monarchy. But there is hardly a fool who wants ingenuity to vex one, if he resolutely sets about it.

Adieu, my dearest!

LETTER V.

TO MRS. FORRESTER.

London.

I YESTERDAY answered the precious, the pious letter of your invaluable husband. My own Amelia! how sweet, how soothing, are the consolations you both so anxiously give me! Pardon my adhering to the principle that placed me in this predicament; and henceforward be assured, that, to controvert a fixed opinion of mine, will only add another vexation to those of which I complain, by obliging me to bury, in my own bosom, the petty cares that waste away as I pour them into yours.

No, my dear: all my dignity of mind, or mein, avails not;---kissed and hugged, I must be, at the pleasure of Mr. Grantham, or abandon my situation. Lady Grantham will not chide him; and his sister's company only licences that intru-

sion which solitude would save me from. It is now a week since I hinted to Sir Joshua, how troublesome to me, and disadvantageous to my pupil, Mr. Grant-ham's perpetual visits to our apartment must prove. The old knight, I fancy, lectured him, for we had a few days of quietness. Sir Joshua seemed to comprehend my cause of displeasure; for he gave me a paternal shake of the hand: said that he was glad his daughter had such a good girl to keep her company, and he should always love me for my candour. Indeed, I have hitherto been a favourite with the old gentleman, from both my easiness of temper, and my taciturnity. You will smile at my naming the last as one of my characteristics: but you are in this case no judge--with those I love not, no one talks less. When in the dear circle of my own family, or yours, I never opened my lips but to improve my small stock of ideas, in drawing forth those around me; and is it a wonder that I then was loquacious? But, in common

conversation, when not enlivened by personal interest, I find a most disgusting apathy. Conversation is not the word I wanted: the whole world can talk,—but how few of its individuals can converse! With the many, let the mind become the topic, and they lose the use of speech: nor do they easily forgive that proudly-conscious being who deprives them of the insipid prerogative. We must bury understanding, as a miser does his gold, if we would enjoy it uncensured and unenvied: yet the utility of both depends on circulation.

The family I am in, rank with the mere talkers; and the very few ideas they have, are spent on the most frivolous subjects. The approaching ball, on my Lord-Mayor's-day, has engrossed them for the last month, in anticipation; and I expect the succeeding one will be lost in recapitulation. My pupil is, after endless discussions, admitted to make her entrée there; and Lady Grantham, who thinks hardly any article of apparel rich or ex-

pensive enough for herself, has been so amazingly saving as to her daughter, that I began to find my pride interested in getting some finery added to her apparel. At this juncture, the mantua-maker most happily dropt the secret, that Miss Grimstead, at next door, had a pink-and-silver tissue ordered. Lady Grantham's economy gave way to her insolence; and she forthwith bought one of the same kind for her daughter. My pupil's heart flutters (for the first time, entre nous, that I have known it flutter at all), with the hope of eclipsing our neighbour, Miss Grimstead. Her godmother has sent her a suit of rich lace, and a pair of pearl ear-rings.--Adieu to every rational pursuit, every proper employment. Miss Grantham thinks, talks, dreams, only of my Lord-Mayor's ball. A dancing-master comes daily, to refresh the memory of Mr. and Miss Grantham; but if you saw them exhibit, you could not keep your countenance: she hobbles so vilely! while he strides about, worse than your

tall cousin; and I often think will make a sudden exit through the window. Nor is our matron less intent on rivaling all the mammas. Good Sir Joshua twists his velvet night-cap; and now smiles on the shoes of the one, and now on the necklace of the other; asking only to be quiet, if that favour may, by his Lady, be permitted him.

The eternal jaunts abroad, and consultations at home, produced by this meditated exhibition, seem rather to fatigue, than enliven, my spirits; for I, alas! find nothing on earth so infectious as folly. Reduced, by people and plans of this kind, to contemplate rather the weakness than the strength of the human mind, we yield insensibly to the very failings we despise. They are but false philosophers who do not turn to us the bright and illuminated side of human nature. Could we begin our career in life with all that knowledge which we pass our best years in acquiring, I am afraid it would only eclipse the brilliance of youth, without substituting the discretion of age; and

deprive us at once of the capacity of either charming or being charmed. It is admitted, among naturalists, that the optic nerves of an infant are very imperfect, and gain strength from every following day. It is plain that the mind has the same dimness: nor need we doubt, but that the omniscient Being, who ordained both, knew what was best for us: to attempt to become wiser than he meant to make us, may in his sight be a crime, and to ourselves is certainly a misfortune.

I do not find myself well of late. Whether the air, the constraint, or my own restless thoughts, impair my constitution, I know not: but I would rather experience, I think, every misery of a heart possessed, than the chilling vacuum which I sometimes find in my own. Adieu! It is ever full when I think of my Amelia.

LETTER VI.

TO MRS. FORRESTER.

London.

I TOLD you, in my last, how entirely we were all engrossed by the approaching city ball. This day, this long-wished day, at length, however slowly, arrived; and the pink-and-silver, with all its fine trimmings, greeted the transported eyes of my pupil, who never yet could call a fashionable dress her own. How often was this spread out, surveyed, admired, tried on! and how anxiously did Miss Grantham inquire, of each by-stander, if it became her! All this, and ten times more, had I witnessed; when, at length, powdered, adorned, and self-satisfied, Lady and Miss Grantham were conveyed to the ball in the new-painted carriage; in which Sir Joshua returned from the dinner; for that worthy man now seems to prefer his

cap, slippers, and the newspaper, to every other human good,—if he may.

I was weary beyond expression with only seeing all this attiring and magnificence, and sat down for some hours, to read and recover myself. When I was summoned to supper, Sir Joshua alone was in the parlour; and as he is a man of few words, our meal was almost a Carthusian one. Leaving him to the news and his meditations, I quickly adjourned to my own room; which happens to be an addition to the house, and over some of his offices. You know what a poor thing I am, if once my sleep is broken; therefore will not wonder that I once more took to my darling essay, “Clio,” resolved to read till Miss Grantham returned. In addition to my other apprehensions at night, I have had, since I lived in this town, such a perpetual dread of fire, that the least noise in the street terrifies me to death.

On this evening, however, I was free from alarm: the servants were all up,

though not very near me ; and I, almost in spite of my own intention, dropt into slumber at intervals. A gentle motion in an adjoining closet, the door of which stood a-jar, reached me suddenly : I sat transfixed, as it were ; but, accusing myself of cowardice--(which I reasonably might, as I had called up the whole family, a few nights before, with the assurance that a thief was in that very closet, when, behold, a silk gown, which hung in the air of the window, by its rustling was proved to be the sole cause of my alarm !),--I sprang up, and, taking the candle, hummed a tune, to deceive myself with, and valiantly threw open the half-closed door ; but my tune changed into something like a scream, when forth darted Mr. Grantham ! who, seizing me, entreated that I would not be alarmed. I asked him, with some sharpness, for what purpose he had deserted his family at the ball, and concealed himself so meanly. With the languishment of Adonis, he threw himself at my feet--(though, Heaven knows, not

all his finery could give him a charm, its gaiety rather making the coarse turn of his features and person more displeasing), to asseverate that nothing but my inhuman coldness could have induced him to take this method of insuring a hearing; he then called on every thing in this world and the next to attest my charms, and his own boundless passion. The gentleman, having uttered this rhapsody, fancied that he had at once delighted and perplexed me.

In the midst of this florid harangue, it never once seemed to enter his head that I might not be struck with the conviction of the superabundance of merit he finds in himself. I, however, prudently replied, that I could have little reliance on his avowed attachment, or respect, while his conduct was so inconsistent with either; that I had no reason to inquire into the nature of his designs, since, however justifiable, I had not the least intention to give them countenance; and that the best proof he could offer me of their honour, would be to quit my

chamber directly; or I should not scruple to alarm the family.

During this speech of mine, he arose; and as I proceeded, losing gradually his air of mildness and submission, he assumed that knowing and harsh character, natural to his coarse features; smiling at me several times in an almost insupportable manner; and when I concluded, grasping both my hands, as if he thought them as large and hard as his own.

“Upon my soul!” cried the incorrigible wretch, “when I consider you are but a girl, you queen it rarely! But dost take me for a fool, love? Couldst thou, in thy conscience, think I meant matrimony? absolute, serious matrimony? Lord help thee, child! these are words of course; and girls take ours for the performance of articles. I see you have been reading Pamela, and mean to figure away in the same character; but, ’faith, my dear! you will not find Mr. B.s more plenty, than such damsels of fifteen. Alarm the family,” quoth’a! “Have more discretion:

that is the whole virtue of the best of you. The family, in the first place, are far enough out of your reach: in the next, were they at the door, what good would that do you? I came here, it is true, by means best known to myself; but though I own this to you, I would deny it to all the rest of the world, unless you use me more handsomely. Come!--Virtue or reputation?--choose between them;--you would have too great an advantage of your sex, were I to permit you to keep them both."

The perverted understanding, impudence, and hardness of heart, shown in this speech, incensed me beyond all prudence. "Monster!" cried I, "be the consequence what it will, I am determined to expose you." I struggled in vain to disengage my hands from his huge strong ones; and, turning anxiously towards the bell, perceived, with a terrible shock, that the tassels were tied up higher than my head.

"Come, come, my dear little girl!"

cried he, with an insolent kind of softness:
 “ I love you too well, you see, to put it in
 your power to expose yourself: sit down,
 and let us talk this over at our leisure.
 Though I will not marry you, that is the
 only thing you may not persuade me to
 do. I roll in wealth; and you shall have
 every wish, that the vainest woman can
 form, gratified. My father has riches
 enough-----”

“ To cover his son’s defects?” retort-
 ed I, contemptuously enough;---“ you err
 in your calculation; the Indies could not
 do it.”

“ By heavens!” cried he, “ I will kiss
 you for that stroke, you dear, little, sar-
 castical angel! I love your person; but
 a girl of wit I adore.”

Hopeless of preventing his keeping
 his word, I gave a shriek that might have
 been heard at Guildhall; when, in a mo-
 ment, both of us distinguished Sir Joshua
 coughing, and in motion, in one of the
 compting-houses; which, most luckily,
 was under my room. His vile son, who,

no doubt, thought him in bed in a distant part of the house, let me go, through mere surprise; nor had presence of mind enough to quit the chamber, though he had ample time; and I, unable to utter a syllable, waved him to the door, not unwilling to escape that *eclaircissement*, in which innocence is too often the sufferer.

Expecting Miss Grantham, I had, most happily for my own character, left the door unbolted: the knight presently threw it wide open, and made his *entrée*, lighted up by two servants, armed; when, casting his eyes upon his son, who rested against one of the pillars of the bed, he peeped around for the object of my fear; but finding only this youth, he seemed almost petrified. I no sooner saw myself protected, than, overcome with tremor and vexation, I sank into a chair, and gave way to my tears.

“What,” at last stammered the worthy old gentleman, “Jemmy, am I to think of this here affair?”

Jemmy, however, was by no means

prepared to answer his father; who, therefore, addressed the same question to me; and I was attempting to recover recollection and speech, when a thundering rap at the street-door announced the return of our ball-party. The little composure I had regained, vanished at this unlucky sound; which seemed hardly to have a less disagreeable effect on the nerves of the two gentlemen--the one, I really believe, wishing himself in a horse-pond; and the other, snug again in his compting-house.

The servants who had lighted up Sir Joshua, involuntarily led their Lady the same way. "Why, what's the meaning of this? Why must I go to the child's room?" cried she; when, bouncing in, she cast her eyes on the three statues, and almost added one to the number. "How," at last exclaimed she, "came you here, Sir Joshua?" Then, turning to her son, "and pray, most polite sir, how came you here? What might be the reason of your leaving me, and your sister, to

shift for ourselves at such a bustling ball? What! have you all three lost the use of your tongues? Sir Joshua! I say—you I will have an answer from. Leave fiddling with your spectacles, and let me understand what all this means.”

The poor knight knew the tone, and obeyed: “Why, lovey,” cried he, “I cannot tell you what I don’t know myself. I only went to look over Tom Coker’s cash-book, in the office below, and, all of a sudden, Miss gave such a squall, that I thought there was a thief in her room, or the house was on fire: so, when I had waked the men, we all came up in a hurry, and found not a soul here, but our Jem!”

Lady Grantham, guessing all perhaps, but certainly a part of the truth, and only anxious to screen her worthless son from his father’s anger, turned towards me with a contemptuous severity---

“Pray, Miss, do you usually admit young gentlemen into your bedchamber?”

I am sorry to find you do, by my son's being here."

"How Mr. Grantham came here, he must inform you himself, Madam," returned I: "if with my knowledge, I should not have called on Sir Joshua for protection. I need hardly add (I am so new to insult) that this is the first I ever met with."

"Insult, truly! Let me tell you, Miss, when gentlemen takes these here liberties, it generally proceeds from the forwardness of girls: and I don't know how you should teach my daughter to behave, when, as one may say, you don't know how to do it yourself."

"You reflect much more on your own character, than mine, Madam, by thus defending your son in the highest breach of decorum and hospitality. His present impertinence proceeds from my having scorned his odious gallantry, while sheltered under the name of honour. I can appeal to himself, if such was not, half an hour ago, his language."

I turned impatiently towards the base

wretch, in the persuasion, that, however bad his heart, he was taken too much by surprise to maintain any assertion to my disadvantage, when I found, to my infinite vexation, that, during our altercation, he had contrived to steal away.

“ Lord help us!” cried the lady, with a provoking vulgar irony: “ you girls are all mighty glad to get off by pleading promises! So our Jemmy promised you, did he !”

“ Nay,” interrupted Sir Joshua, “ if the lad promised you, my dear, I must needs say—”

“ You must needs say !” exclaimed his virulent rib; “ and what, in the mightiness of your wisdom, did you mean to say ?”

“ Allow me one word, Sir Joshua,” cried I—“ your Ladyship will admit I have a right to speak.--I equally despised Mr. Grantham’s promises and himself. His troublesome gallantry was all that I thought I could have to encounter disagreeable in the family ; for little did I imagine that your Ladyship would coun-

tenance your son in an insult, which, if any other man offered to his sister, you would so highly resent."

"True, Miss," returned she haughtily: "but there is a great deference in the persons"—(there is, indeed, thought I). "Girls like you, who are to work for their living, ought to keep their betters at a distance; and then it is easy enough to be virtuous."

I could hardly, on recollecting her own history, avoid smiling in her face. Alas! how theory and practice may differ. However, I governed my looks, and only coldly replied,

"True, Madam; but that very dependence gives women, when ill-treated, a double claim to pity and protection."

"Lovey, let me speak," cried the knight: "positively I will speak this once. You may see, with half an eye, that Jem has been all along in love with Miss. The boy is old enough to marry and settle; and e'en let him please himself, as his father did before him. She is a fine young

woman; and, 'faith! she speaks like an oracle. Such a sightly smart girl will keep the spark in good order; and we sha'n't have the devil to pay, every two months, with some grandee's kept mistress. A fig for birth: we never care for that on this side Temple-Bar; and I have money enough not to mind her having none. When folks marry, good-nature and good sense is the principal--"

Lady Grantham had suffered her spouse to proceed in my panegyric, not as approving it, but because speechless through surprise and rage: she now recovered utterance, and, starting up, her face crimson with passion, and her two little gray eyes flashing fire--

"Are you tipsy, bewitched, or mad? or is the devil himself in that foolish head of yours, Sir Joshua, to-night? Marry her! Consent that your only son, with two hundred thousand pound, should marry a little fortin-hunting, pitiful, country-parson's daughter! If a boy of mine had so little spirit, he should have as little

fortin, I promise you. Sure I was crazed, to take her into my house;---but here she stays no longer."

"Zooks! my lady," interrupted my old friend, "do not flame out in such a confounded way. The girl is no bastard; and if she don't bring a fortune, she may save one;"---adding, in a muttering voice, "if every body had been so nice, the boy, for aught I know, had never been born."

"Oh! this is too much!" reiterated the lady.---"I shall choke---die---You will drive me quite mad among you. A bastard!---you old fool! Why, if she had been the bastard of a parson of quality, I should not have minded it half so much; but these half-gentry are as proud of their education, as if they were worth a PLUMB."

"The blessing of that education, Madam," cried I, starting up (to look, indeed, indignantly down, I fancy, on my mean insulter), "I never knew till this moment. How, without it, could I controul the resentment, and contempt, such unmerited

contumely must occasion. Let not me, however, become, for one instant, the subject of dispute; for this little, pitiful, country-parson's daughter, was taught by him to value nothing on earth but virtue and merit; nor regards those with whom she mixes through the gross medium of their riches. My mind is so much above your boasted son, that I should reject him, had he millions to offer me. Never, while by honest industry I can earn the necessities of life; never will I sell myself, to obtain its superfluities. These are my real sentiments. But beware, Madam, how you repeat this culpable indulgence to your son, lest you root vice in his heart. As to me, be assured that he is as safe from my designs as from my love. Allow me, by withdrawing, to spare myself any further indignity."

Taking a candle, I retired into the celebrated closet, too angry to know or care for what might follow. In the morning I packed up my clothes, and sent my compliments to Sir Joshua: as I was de-

parting, he popt his velvet cap out of the compting-house, afraid perhaps to have further communication with me; crammed a bank-note into my hand, with a smile; and told me, that, if he was a young man, he would marry me himself. I could not but like my worthy old advocate.

This is but an unlucky outset. However, I mean to console myself by a Christmas dinner with you. People of fashion, they tell me, do not come to town till after that season; and your sister will watch, and send for me, if a proper situation offers.

Adieu!

LETTER VII.

TO MRS. FORRESTER.

London.

DURING the greater part of my cold journey, I meditated, my dear Amelia, on the touching regret which you expressed at

our parting!--yet surely it was unworthy of your understanding, however it might show the sensibility of your heart. The world was not made for any individual: I was born only to fill up a useful place in it; and ought daily to thank that gracious God who, while he ordained me to form my own fate, endued me with those faculties which might make it a rational one.

Industry ever brings with it the invaluable blessings of an approving heart, peace and independence. To me, these obscure advantages are infinitely preferable to accepting the bounty of an affluent kinswoman, who might, at her own option, render me a cipher in society; and even then, by a look, reduce me to stifle in my own bosom the bitter emotions it might be almost bursting with. No, my dear! hard as my lot appears, I can better bear any thing, than to become the sacrifice of pride. I know my aunt's temper well;--she is (to use a kind of paradox) only easy, by being ever on

the fret; and, like many other people, makes so free with her own relations, as to vent on them humours which her menial servants could not be bribed to bear! Yet do not, from this, imagine me too proud to receive an obligation. When did I blush to be indebted to my Amelia? But am I not certain, that her hand is not more liberal than her heart; and that every kindness they unite to lavish, springs from the most exalted principles of sympathy and benevolence? Too well do I know, and too highly prize, the pleasure of obliging, to deny my friend so pure a satisfaction.

I found your sister-in-law, my dear, quite unhappy, lest I should lose the opportunity of fixing with Lady Westbury: nor was I without a secret wish of being in a family so elegant and distinguished. The history of the lady we all know; but of her beauty we very imperfectly judge, however highly it may have been spoken of;—it is, indeed, exquisite! I saw her, too, in the situation most disadvantage-

ous--under the hands of her friseur; yet was I enchanted! She varies her humour, I really believe, every moment, only to display her charms. She now found fault with the man--now laughed at him; yet was ever lovely, ever irresistible! To talk to a governess was quite novel to her! She "wished people would print catechisms applicable to the common concerns of life:"--and broke off her inquiry into my qualifications for the employment, to ask where I had got that sweet morning cap! Hearing I had purchased it in Paris, she would have it off my head in a moment, to see if it became her:--what cap would not! She was fascinated with it; and became perfectly satisfied, that the woman who had taste enough to dress well, must have talents for whatever else she might undertake. Her milliner was summoned by express:--but two minutes had hardly elapsed ere she raved at the tediousness of the creature; and, having made up her mind not to part with the dear cap, implored me to take one of her frightful

things in its place, which would confer an everlasting obligation on her. Fifty caps were tumbled over, that she might find one twice as valuable as that she kept; and my compliance so bound her to me, that I made my own terms. I am to have a salary of fifty pounds a-year, and a chamber to myself, adjoining to that of the young ladies; to whom the whole attic story is appropriated. A table is to be served for them and me; and a carriage to be allotted for us to take the air in. This arrangement once fixed, Lady Westbury told me, that, if I had any more stipulations to make, she must give me a *carte-blanche*; and ran away to her *vis-a-vis*--as gay as she was lovely. Never did I see so volatile, so beautiful, so fascinating, so unformed a young creature!

I have been three days in this region of elegance and gaiety: and may now, I think, pronounce myself at home. I see only a profusion of every good which human life affords; and hear only the vivacity of youth and happiness.--Who

could believe that all this is merely superficial !

My pupils are yet too young for me to find tuition a task : they are just taken from the nurse-maids, by the desire of their father (as I understand), lest their infantine forms should be warped by neglect, or their manners become gross by associating with servants. Two more enchanting little creatures never did I see ! Lady Henrietta, the youngest, is a dear, wild, auburn babe, who clings to you with irresistible grace ; while her more collected sister gives you the softest image of her mother's beauty, blended with a downcast sensibility that mother never knew.

The apartments we inhabit overlook Hyde-Park, chiefly, as the house is a corner one : I see, therefore, nothing of the Lord or Lady, and know only what I have learnt from the housekeeper ; who, it seems, grew up in the family, and loves to expatiate on the characters of those she serves with that loquacity common to

her age, and authorised in her situation. She has given me all the romantic story; and I have entered into it so deeply, that I am committing it to paper, and sometimes read my narrative to Mrs. Ellison, as gravely as Molière did his plays to his old woman, touching and re-touching as she says is right.

This employment diversifies my days a little, and relieves that solitude which is the most irksome part of my present situation. I mean to send you my first literary production, as soon as it is finished to my mind: so suspend your impatience. Should you find any thing romantic or improbable in the incidents, remember that *I* am not to be questioned, but my old woman. Yet, when we look deeply into life, we shall, perhaps, find hardly any stretch of invention more singular than the scenes daily realising around us: nevertheless, if one idea not familiar to the mind, or in the scope of our own immediate knowledge, be presented to us, we all cry "Romance!"--nor

recollect that this word is the most comprehensive one in the whole dictionary, as it includes every idea unknown to the person who pronounces it.

I guess at your surprise to find me thus become an author; but recollect, my dear, how entirely, in my isolated situation, the soul is thrown back on herself: how happy, then, are those to whom the love of letters opens a source of rational though solitary pleasure! I knew not, till now, all my obligations to that revered father, who, by associating me in his pursuits, while he elevated me by his example, taught me to find entertainment in reflexion, elevation even in obscurity.

You will, I doubt not, be struck with my description of Lord Westbury; and much let down to be told that I am so very a novelist as to take all this fine account on trust—for I have never seen the hero of my tale: yet to see him, is, perhaps, all necessary to break the charm. The world, the corrupt, the destroying world, how soon does it leave its traces on the

most perfect human countenance ! Alas that it should !

I do not deny my having some curiosity to look at this formidable lord, but I have not yet discovered how I can indulge it :---the House sits late, and he makes amends for the vigil of politics by sleeping in the day : in truth, he seldom comes in till I am in bed, or goes out till I am at dinner.

Lady Westbury's pleasant humour is, I am told, not very usual, and hardly ever reaches beyond her own apartment. She has seen her children only once since I came here, and then did not think proper to admit me : her woman brought the young ladies back, with a message so cold and haughty from their mamma as showed that she knew all the difference of having me at her command, and only wishing it. Yet from her I bear this treatment without much chagrin, for from her I have no right to expect any other.

I met an old acquaintance the other morning, as I walked with my pupils in

Kensington Gardens, who told me that my aunt means to bring Marianne to town, in the hope, no doubt, of her marrying well. My sister must be much harassed at home, if she adopts this worldly odious idea. Perhaps, among my poor aunt's kind motives, may be a wish of yet more mortifying the niece who is determined not to depend on her.

Adieu !

THE PROMISED STORY.

THERE is no seduction, in all the variety which human life presents, more dangerous than that of rank. Registered honours at once ascertain in society the respect due to the individual, and, by saving him the trouble of seeking to ingratiate himself with his company, too often lay the foundation of a weak, yet unconquerable, pride ; which is the more disgusting, as it arises from causes wholly impersonal. This kind of pride had been

for nearly a century the characteristic of the Earls of Westbury. Springing from a glorious branch of the house of Clifford, and possessed of a splendid coat of arms, which these nobles never attempted to enrich by one achievement, they lived, in fact, but in the fame of their ancestors. Pride of this description, however, is destined to suffer much in the circle of modern and polished society, where politeness levels every rank, and understanding gives distinction to every merit. The grandfather of the present Earl of Westbury, therefore, conceived early a disgust to the court; and, retiring to his own estates, established there a kind of petty sovereignty. An open table, at which the master was often the greatest stranger, and always the most reserved man, attracted not a second time one free or liberal guest: it was soon necessarily encircled by underlings and parasites; who compensated for their entertainment, by lavish adulation, and depreciating tales of the neighbouring gentry. In such com-

pany the father of the present earl grew up, and thus still more contracted an understanding to which nature had set narrow limits, while a man of great merit and extensive knowledge laboured in vain to improve it. The only advantage Mr. Leslie saw a probability of deriving from his employment as tutor to the heir, was to obtain church preferment for his only son, who was much beloved by his pupil. In time, both the Earl and his son's tutor died. The new Lord Westbury presented young Leslie to the expected living; continuing in habits of as much friendship as a cold heart and a narrow mind allowed him to feel. Both married; and Lord Westbury, in a few years, saw himself the father of three fine boys; whom, in conformity to a promise made in his juvenile days to Mr. Leslie, he resolved to commit to his care and tuition. To rescue the children from the weak and extravagant fondness of Lady Westbury, her Lord rather chose to enlarge the parsonage for their reception, than ac-

commodate their tutor at Arlington Court. The fond mother vainly remonstrated against this removal, although she was not without reason in thus objecting. Mrs. Leslie had won her husband's heart by a degree of acquired knowledge uncommon in her sex, and a taste for science, which he had flattered himself would go hand in hand with his through life: a short time, however, convinced the husband that she knew too little to make herself happy, and too much to make him so;—disputes arose between them, on subjects in which neither admitted any third person to be entitled to judge. Of all jealousies, that of talent is the most fatal to happiness;—nothing can long silence, nothing can ever satisfy it: not even the grave can shut up so inveterate a disgust: it survives the object; and corrodes, to the last moment of decaying nature, the heart which once admits it. Yet surely it is a greater fault in the one sex to be jealous, where they never allow a competition, than for the other to be

arrogant, when they so seldom rise to any.

Such, with a fine understanding on either side, was the life of Dr. Leslie and his lady. The only advantage they mutually derived from wit and knowledge, was to taunt with more keenness, and wound without ceasing to smile. At the juncture when Lord Westbury removed his sons to the parsonage, a new source of discord had arisen there. Mrs. Leslie, for the first time, found herself in that state so many think absolutely necessary to render matrimony happiness ;— here it was quite otherwise. Both husband and wife set their hearts on a girl : Mrs. Leslie, that she might make her daughter yet more elaborately informed than herself, in the hope that *she* might never know the misfortune of being overborne by her husband ; and the Doctor, that he might avoid an increase of the evil which tormented him, resolved to confine the girl to the simple acquirements of making a shirt and a pudding. Heaven prevented

all further differences between the learned pair on this important subject, by calling away the lady, three days after she gave birth to a little girl; and the comfort of having his own way, soon reconciled Dr. Leslie to seeing his poor child motherless. Henrietta was committed to the charge of Mrs. Ellison, and long remained in ignorance and insignificance.

Dr. Leslie had, in the tuition of Lord Westbury's sons, a rational and pleasing employment; though he did not find all of them equally able or willing to second his endeavours. Lord Clifford was by nature indolent and morose; by habit, cold and philosophic. The boundless indulgence of his parents, soon gave him an ascendancy over them, which hardly left him a wish to hide those faults he now saw no necessity of curing. So great became his affection for home, that it was with difficulty he ever quitted it; and so disagreeable did he make it to his younger brothers, that they as seldom resorted thither. However, the time that the youths

dwelt at the parsonage was well employed. Edward, the second son, answered to every wish of Dr. Leslie: gentle, modest, ingenuous, penetrating, and ardent, whatever he undertook, his heart was always in it; and his only pride, that of silently excelling. George, the youngest, was a boy of fine parts, but little application: wild, arch, and restless, he early became the terror of all good housewives, and at the head of every village combustion.

Men of science love only those who have a taste for it; and Dr. Leslie was obliged to preserve an apparent equality in his conduct to the three brothers, while his heart made a very sensible distinction. It was not the easiest part of his duty to oblige them to live well together; for Lord Clifford soon became so insolent and overbearing, that the younger lads could only maintain their own ground by leaguering against him. Dr. Leslie very plainly perceived who was the most in fault, and exerted every effort to subdue, in the

elder son, the family failing: but, while the heir had home to resort to, his tutor's authority was lost; and the attempt at asserting it only disgusted and wholly alienated the youth.

To his obvious faults, Lord Clifford now added art. The exaggeration of self-love, even when no deceit is intended, will easily delude those who content themselves with hearing one party only: and as the heir did not scruple any amplification that would influence his father to adopt another mode of educating him, Lord Westbury began to believe that the head of the house was sacrificed by Dr. Leslie's partiality for his brother Edward; of whose progress the tutor often imprudently boasted, while the modesty of the boy made that gentleman's word the only proof of it. Lord Westbury vainly tried to persuade Dr. Leslie, that the only way to forward the studies of Lord Clifford, was to give him the pre-eminence to which his eldership entitled him. The Doctor treated this advice with ridicule:

and as the young Lord had sealed his father's lips on the imaginary injuries and oppressions he often complained of, the Earl was at a loss how to act upon the upright soul of Dr. Leslie. Lord Clifford had no difficulty in adopting another expedient; and, by complaining of ill health, he first made his alarmed mother hurry with him to Clifton, and afterwards summon his father to meet them in London. Upon full advice, it was settled, by the faculty, that his native air did not agree with him; and a villa near town, of consequence, became the residence of Lord and Lady Westbury; where a more complaisant tutor informed them, that this interesting youth, should he conquer his delicate consumptive habit, would become a prodigy of talents and knowledge. Having thus contrived to engross all the cares, thoughts, and affections of both his parents, Lord Clifford began to find himself enough recovered to order a new phaeton, and commence Buck.

Though Dr. Leslie's good understand-

ing prevented his showing his sense of this indignity, it did not prevent his deeply feeling it; nor did the consideration, that he yet had in charge all of the family whom he could wish for, conciliate him. The consciousness of unkindness to their children, as well as to Dr. Leslie, made Lord and Lady Westbury insensibly shrink from all intercourse, save that of decency and remittances. Perhaps it is to this cruel conduct in their parents, that the young Cliffords owed their merit. Accustomed to find in Dr. Leslie, not only every distinction of science and virtue, but a true and tender affection for themselves, when they were almost forgotten at home, his influence over them became unbounded. To increase their attachment to the parsonage, the heir now and then ran down, with his phaeton and grooms, at once to indulge his spleen and overwhelm the rustics, as he termed his brothers, with town airs: but, as knowledge is always knowledge, either in town or country; and address

loses not its nature because it speaks not the last new phrase of the day; Edward and George were generally able to expose the ignorance of the young Lord, and shorten his career of insolence.

A dangerous malady, with which Lady Westbury was suddenly seized, first made her sensible that she had failed in her duty to her younger sons; who were summoned by express: they flew to town, but arrived too late to receive their mother's last blessing.

Overwhelmed with grief, strangers in their father's house, and wholly unacquainted with the great world, the two youths were always importunately inquiring when they were to go again to Dr. Leslie: and the wish alone was enough to offend Lord Westbury; who, perceiving not their ripened minds, saw only their unformed manners, and often spoke degradingly of them both, only because they wanted the modish polish, which was all that their brother had. How could the two youths ever think

they escaped too soon from the splendid circles, into which they were never led without apologies for the rusticity of their appearance, and raillery which alone could make such mortifying apologies necessary. It is ever in the power of the politely assured to produce in the modest those blushes which they delight to render ridiculous: and a power of this kind has no bound, should the person thus odiously drawn into observation be either too young, or too dependent, to retort. Youths, modest, ingenuous, and informed, like the young Cliffords, could not but shrink from such society; and they both received with delight their father's permission to quit all the pleasures of the metropolis for an obscure and solitary parsonage; for there they well knew that the rich and ripening powers of intellect might freely unfold, beneath the eye of their venerable and liberal instructor.

The vacuum which the loss of his two pupils had made in the life of Dr. Leslie, first obliged him to turn his at-

tention towards his daughter; whom he suddenly discovered to be wholly unqualified ever to supply their place, or to become his companion. Henrietta had, in conformity to his own choice, hitherto ran about his house in common with the domestic animals he petted. The sole benefit he allowed her to know from having learnt to read, was the study of a few moral essays, and some folios of divinity: while now and then to add a receipt to the family book of her grandmother, which she had early been employed to copy fair, was the only use she knew of writing. One acquirement alone had he ever incited her to excel in; and a variety of flower-pots, uncouth in form, or figures laden with gaudy embroidery, were witnesses, in rich frames, of his respect for the art which gave distinction to the wife of Ulysses.

Happily for Miss Leslie, she had no natural taste for science, no innate refinement which could make her painfully sensible of her own deficiencies or her

father's injustice. A fine voice disposed her to love music; and to have a master in that art, was the only request for instruction which she ever ventured to her father: but, by declaring it both useless and noisy, he at once over-ruled her inclination. Edward, however, with the same predilection, had the means of indulging it, and soon became a proficient on several instruments. Miss Leslie often caught the airs he played; and thus interesting him in her wish, he besieged the Doctor; but in vain. It then occurred to him, that, for two hours in the afternoon, during which the Doctor usually indulged himself in a nap, he might instruct the young lady himself: and the eagerness with which she embraced the offer, while with grateful assiduity she received his lessons, first gave the young man consequence in his own eyes, while it touched the tender spring which arises from the indistinct combination of our feelings, till the whole palpitating into love, with imperceptible but fatal influence,

that becomes through life our prevailing passion. Edward now every day surveyed, with increasing fondness, the beautiful girl; who, apparently engrossed by the art she was learning, hung over him to catch the notes. Though still a child in the eyes and calculation of her father, in those of every other person Henrietta had almost shot up into a woman. The dazzling fairness of her complexion added softness to blue eyes of peculiar lustre; and the ingenuous modesty with which they always beamed, seemed to kindle the delicate vermilion her cheek was enriched with. Had her form equalled her features, Miss Leslie could have known no competitor in the world of beauty; but, though not absolutely defective, it wanted the fine finish which eminently marked that of her lover. Edward Clifford had just reached the happy height which ranked him with the tall; and united, in his mien, dignity with elegance. His manly complexion was fair without effeminacy, and florid without

coarseness ; while his deep hazel eyes acquired a look of exquisite interest from the locks of dark auburn hair which broke over his forehead with a wild grace art can never equal though it may imitate. One peculiarity alone marked his countenance : by the formation of his eye-lids and lashes, that modesty which caused him often to look down served only to show his beauty to advantage ; and had it been possible for him ever to have seen the fine effect of this natural expression, it would have been imputed to him as a studied one.

Edward Clifford had just reached that period of life when the heart takes the lead in the human character—indeed, reigns alone—often bidding defiance to all those worldly maxims which it so soon and insensibly adopts on a closer and more familiar intercourse with mankind. Love was now the incessant and only emotion of a nature which knew neither pride, vanity, nor ambition ; and he soon lived for her alone who had taught him that to

live was such a pleasure. Henrietta smiled at these tender extravagances, with an indulgence which would have satisfied a lover less refined: but Edward required her to follow the feeling; and often complained of her insensibility,—though his brother laughingly observed, that it was always in her absence.

Dr. Leslie had long persuaded himself, that young people uniformly brought up together would never know more than a fraternal attachment; nor did it once occur to him, that he had placed his blooming daughter in such a situation as might have excused, in his pupil, a crime against virtue. Indeed, the childish, timid, and reserved air, which Miss Leslie insensibly assumed in the presence of her father, and the constraint to which Edward subjected himself when he was of the party, might well have duped a man much more observing.

Devoted to his eldest son, and intent on aggrandizing him by an accumulation of the family wealth as well as honours,

Lord Westbury thought only of giving, to his two younger children, their choice of the liberal professions, and the fortune of their mother ; which, indeed, it was not at his option to take from them. The youths were informed by their brother, who drove down to bid them farewell before he went abroad, that he had already formed an engagement with a young Irish peeress in her own right, whose fortune, by a long minority, had increased to an enormous sum. The elders, on both sides, waited only till she should be old enough to complete the contract made by her guardians: and, to shorten the interval, he purposed to take a trip to Paris; not doubting but that on his return he should find Edward's luxuriant locks trimmed into a snug parson's curl, and George's wretched shock of hair sprouted into the bushy wig of a barrister. Edward and George assured him, that he should at least never find either of them such a coxcomb as himself; and, with civil contempt, the three brothers parted.

The sole object of his hopes, cares, and pleasures, being no longer in the sight of the Earl, he soon turned his thoughts towards Doctor Leslie's young pupils, whom he summoned home, sending such letters and acknowledgements to their excellent tutor as evinced to the trio that they were to part for ever. Let those who love, judge what passed in the soul of Edward, whose world was comprised in the house which he inhabited. Doctor Leslie, delighted at the lively regret of his favourite, fondly appropriated those tears which flooded the youth's eyes from a more tender cause, and exerted every influence to reconcile him to the arrangements of his father. "Moderate your concern, my dear lad," would the good man say, "however flattering I may find it; moderate it, I beseech you! If you thus feel our separation, what must I do? In the busy and gay world, where your father means, something prematurely, to launch you, a thousand new pleasures and occupations will arise, and in-

sensibly weaken the remembrance of those you leave behind—(may you find in them an equal delight, and enjoy them with the same innocence!)—while I, confined by age, habit, profession, circumstances, within the narrow circle which you have hitherto trodden with me, shall see, by your absence, my own house suddenly changed into a solitude! Since to me, my son,” added the good man, after a pause, “you must be hereafter as if you were dead, let me at least know that you live for yourself and others: write to me confidentially—constantly; consider me as one deeply interested in your welfare, and on whose candid advice you may fully rely—one to whom you will ever be inexpressibly dear—one who has a fond pride in your ripening talents, an ardent wish for your prosperity and happiness. It is now only you can apply the knowledge which you have so assiduously obtained. Go, with a desire to love, a readiness to obey, your father; whose claims upon you no erroneous conduct on his part can cancel; but always

remember, that, in this quiet corner of the world, you have left a friend, whom no interest can detach from you--no influence over-rule. If crossed by fortune, or wounded by ingratitude, seek consolation or kindness with him, whose home will ever be yours while yet a roof covers him. But I will no more doubt your success than your merit; and, to ensure it, impress deeply upon your young heart one maxim, which comprehends volumes,--watch others less than yourself; fear others less than yourself--it is within his own bosom, and disturbed passions, that man finds his most dangerous enemy; and whenever you are disappointed or unhappy, look at home for the fault, and thus turn the suffering to account. If thus you boldly regulate your own nature, you will in time rise above weakness or temptation. Yet well I know that the world is full of wretches accustomed to study the characters of others, who will erect their hopes on any lurking foible which they may find in yours. You have seen the danger of self-

love, and the adulation paid to rank, in your elder brother; and may prove happier in proportion as you are less exposed to it: yet well I likewise know, that, if you have only virtue to lose, some ready villain will find a diabolical delight in robbing you of that. Choose your associates, therefore, with caution. I need not add, that your friendships ought to be few: men of merit have not the same inducement to multiply these. Your father himself, cold and forgetful as you have hitherto found him, cannot live in your society without seeing you with my eyes: go, then, my dear boy! and let him discover, that it has been the study of my whole life to discharge the precious duty for which I stood pledged to him;—and may that gracious God who has as yet crowned my wishes for you, guide you in safety through the dangers of this world, and restore you once more to me in that to come!”——As the venerable Leslie turned aside to conceal his ungovernable emotion, Edward seized his hand, and,

wringing it in silent acknowledgement, suddenly withdrew. In the strong conviction of his personal influence, Edward had hesitated on the subject of his fond secret; but the invincible rectitude which marked the character of Dr. Leslie, discouraged the avowal: and the terror of Henrietta, when her lover consulted her, obliged him to set out for home, under the painful consciousness of concealment, and a deep anxiety as to the event of his love.

Dr. Leslie had judged very rightly, in telling Edward that the absence of the heir would open their father's eyes to the merits of his younger sons. Lord Westbury saw and felt that they both were accomplished and informed young men: but this conviction flattered without attaching him; for his own soul continually suggested, that they could feel no obligation to the parent who had given them only existence. A very short time had elapsed ere Lord Westbury proposed to Edward to fix on some liberal profession; and the weakness of the young man's

heart rendering him indifferent to the choice, his father considered the option offered to himself as implicit obedience, and lost, in this admission of his parental prerogative, the wish of exerting it. Edward, when again urged to choose, recollected, that, by devoting himself to the church, he should once more move within the sphere of Dr. Leslie: and as several rich livings were in the gift of the family, Lord Westbury commended the prudence of his election. George, enamoured of the gaieties of London, chose the bar: and the two brothers now parted for the first time. Edward obtained Lord Westbury's permission to pass six months more with Dr. Leslie, previous to his going to Oxford; and agreeably surprised that worthy man, both with his return, and its declared motive. Henrietta, too, appeared delighted with a choice which she alone had occasioned; and her approbation crowned the felicity of her lover; for to be beloved was the generous foible of his nature.

Short as Edward's absence had been, a change had occurred which proved important to his fate, though too slight to attract his notice. An old schoolfellow of Dr. Leslie's, having amassed a large fortune in trade, had, in the interim, written to that gentleman to purchase an estate for him in his neighbourhood; whither he retired with three marriageable daughters; who soon found the country insupportable, and Miss Leslie an ignorant blooming hoyden. The sudden return of Edward Clifford made, apparently, a total change in their opinion of her: she became at once the delight of all three—a lovely rustic, a sweet child of nature, whom they should find it a pleasure to polish: all courted her equally; all expatiated on the brilliant assemblies, the high ton of London: and while they insinuated the poison of dissipation into her young heart, they won that of her father by the most rigid attention to their duties at church. Nor did they fail separately to level their artillery of charms at Edward; who,

wholly occupied with the fair rustic, saw not their design ; till Henrietta herself pointed it out, and, in the consciousness of power and beauty, suffered the town trio to exhaust themselves in vain attacks ; while she entertained both herself and her lover by a vein of ridicule most frequently found in persons who are uneducated, as they have no exquisite sense of propriety to restrict their use of it.

The three neglected London ladies, looking on themselves as singly insulted and injured, united in the common cause of revenge. A thousand whispers now were spread abroad, imputing selfish and worldly conduct to the most upright divine that ever adorned his function. Dr. Leslie soon became “an artful sycophant, who had alienated Lord Westbury’s sons from their father, and, by a life of finesse, was now ensnaring one of them to his ruin. The poor, ignorant, little girl had her head turned, between her father and the infatuated young man ;—it would be well for her if nothing worse happened !

for should the hoyden keep her virtue, it would be accident, and not merit !” All eyes were thus drawn towards the parsonage ; and the young people were in a manner married by their neighbours, while quite out of the secret themselves. The incidental coldness these injurious reports produced towards Miss Leslie, only led her to confirm them, by showing her influence over her lover ; who, charmed with an indulgence which he construed into sensibility, considered it as the endearing reward of his own.

When his young pupils first took leave of the parsonage, Dr. Leslie had found it convenient to remove his daughter, from an apartment adjoining his own, to one on the ground floor, which the two brothers had vacated. When Edward returned, as his stay was to be short, Dr. Leslie would not make any new domestic arrangement, but placed him in the chamber above, of late that of Henrietta. To obtain some moments of secret love, the young man resorted to the boyish expe-

dient of mounting and descending by a cord, fastened within the window, and knotted at intervals: the casement below was the place of assignation: and three summer months thus sweetly passed away in hope and pleasure.

An occurrence, wholly unexpected though highly probable, then made a sudden and interesting change in the situation of every party: Lord Westbury, by a domestic who announced him to be incapable of writing from grief, notified to Edward the death of his elder brother, in consequence of a wound received in a duel, at Florence; and required, as the heir, his immediate presence. Never was such an alteration made in the fate of a young man, and so little in his character. Hardly had he recovered the shock of the news, before he perceived the cruel distance which his newly-acquired honours would place between him and the object of his choice; and too truly did he love, to be gratified with any good that might interfere with his cherished passion. The agi-

tation of the concurring circumstances made Dr. Leslie think it unwise to let the young man set out for London till the following day; and, having gained this important respite, Edward waited with impatience for the hour when he could relieve his own heart by assuring that of Henrietta. No less impatient on her part, she was ready at the window; and, rather than suffer him to enter it, which he for the first time urged, she allowed him to lift her out of it; after which they retired together, to a large alcove at the further end of the garden, to renew their vows, and arrange all their future prospects.

The amazing change which a few hours had effected in the fate of his young friend, so sensibly disturbed the spirits of Dr. Leslie, that, after lying in bed till worn out, in the hope of composing himself, he arose, and opened his window. The cool air, the fragrance of the flowers, and the beams of a bright moon, tempted him to traverse the garden, and meditate at leisure. The serpentine walk

into which he struck, meandered behind the alcove; where the lovers, engrossed by each other, heard not his footsteps. Dr. Leslie's ear was not so untrue; for the voice of a man at once reached it, and startled him with the idea of housebreakers. The moment he, however, spent in considering, at once made it obvious that the speaker was Edward; and the tenderness of his language, that a woman must be his companion. Dr. Leslie listened in silent indignation for the answer; and had guessed at every maid-servant in his family, when the well known voice of his daughter struck upon his heart. Afflicted and trembling, he drew still nearer; and the fear of making only a half-discovery, alone prevented his rushing forward, and uttering the anguish with which he was overwhelmed. The lovers, unconscious of the predicament they stood in, continued their impassioned discourse: and, incensed as the listener found himself, it was a great relief to him to hear Lord Clifford solemnly protest, that the

only pleasure he could ever derive from his newly-acquired honours, would be one day to place his Henrietta in a rank which her merit entitled her to, and her beauty would adorn. Renewed vows to each other, evinced the innocence of both lovers; and the sudden clouding in of the moon made them quit the alcove. Anxious to know how so dangerous an intercourse could have been carried on without his knowledge, and impatient to ascertain where it ended, the feeble feet of the father had conveyed him through his circuitous path, before Edward and Henrietta had reached the house by a straight one. Dr. Leslie there beheld the conference conclude with an innocent embrace: and Edward, after assisting his mistress to spring over the window into her chamber, ascended to his own; where love, and fond reliance, gave to each the happiest slumbers. Not so passed the nocturnal hours with the distressed and irresolute father: his eyes being once opened, he considered his past blindness with asto-

nishment, too plainly perceiving that by the malicious it might be represented as voluntary : and so delicate were his feelings, that the testimony of his own conscience was insufficient to his happiness, unless it was confirmed by that of the world. Memory, so long dormant, now suddenly overwhelmed him with a train of circumstances which he felt were enough to have alarmed a suspicious, and should never have been unregarded by a prudent, parent. “ But she was such a child ! ” repeated he. The child was, however, sixteen ; and that plea, he knew, would be one only to his own bosom.

There were, amidst these painful recollections of the worthy man, some of a less gloomy complexion. Could he have asked one favour of heaven with the certainty of success, and only one, it would have been to have made Edward Clifford his son ; and that was become impossible only for the few last hours, which had made him the heir of an earldom. Could he qualify with his conscience, and appear still un-

informed of the young people's views, Dr. Leslie felt that they might work themselves out into the completion of his wish:--but how, alas! could an upright nature use a simulation so mean! or selfishly sacrifice the sacred sense of integrity! Amidst ten thousand doubts, fears, and wishes, he at length settled with himself the line of conduct which he ought to adopt: and, though his nature shrunk from the task, he determined on its execution. After which, he thought he might be exempted from taking any other share in the consequences, than that of protecting his daughter's honour.

As Dr. Leslie had taken leave of the young Lord in the evening, the sight of his portmanteau ready packed up in the hall, and himself walking about in the parlour, therefore, a little surprised the early traveller. But the tender love Edward had always seen in his venerable friend, made him consider the intention of accompanying him only as a new mark of regard: and, to show his gratitude, he

exerted every mental power to render the journey agreeable to his companion, for whose abstraction of manner he found it impossible to account.

Lord Westbury, subdued by the recent affliction, received both his son and the doctor with more cordiality and kindness than either expected. The days of ceremonious grief necessarily elapsed, before Dr. Leslie could venture a new wound to the feelings of the father. The long-sought opportunity of loneliness obliged him, perhaps, most to hurt his own, by the communication of his interesting discovery. --“Did my conscience not witness in my favour, my Lord,” cried the venerable Leslie with apostolic firmness, “I might meanly leave it to time and circumstances to inform you of an incident which chance alone communicated to me: but my notions of my duty extend much farther: and the same integrity which induces me to counteract the designs of your son, would have induced me to prevent them, could I have foreseen what I now am

in honour bound to disclose. Lord Clifford, I have reason to think, before he bore that title, paid secret addresses to my daughter, who is, as you must recollect, hardly past her nonage:—to say that he has never had, nor shall ever have, my sanction, without he obtains that of your Lordship, is surely needless. At his time of life, with new views and duties before him, it may not be difficult to detach his heart from a passion almost childish. Might I add any thing to this information, I should recommend to you, my Lord, from my knowledge of his temper, not to know aught upon the subject, unless he has the courage to assert his own choice:—and this way alone can you traverse his designs, without weakening both his filial respect and affection. On my part, rely on a most watchful attention; though I know his principles too well to apprehend conduct that would at once disgrace himself and me.—Oh! my Lord! could you imagine how fondly my heart inclines to this mistaken young

man, you would pity the pangs which my probity now gives me." The tears which at intervals flooded the eyes of the venerable Leslie, the superiority of mind and manner in which he made a disclosure so humiliating to himself, prevented even Lord Westbury from giving words to the deep contempt he felt. With a cold sarcastic smile, he replied, "that Edward's situation was so much changed, as to make his constancy in love very problematical: nor did he apprehend, that either father would find it an impossible thing to break a match wholly unsuitable."

The wise of all ages have agreed that virtue is her own reward; and, in truth, she ought to be so, since seldom do persons actuated by that generous principle obtain any other.

Dr. Leslie, having acquitted himself of a painful duty, by communicating what he well knew must one day or other empoison the peace of the youth so beloved, sought, by the avowal of all his partiality, to make

his favourite a mental compensation. The more he cherished Edward, the more the youth became endeared to him. In spite of philosophy, it was but too obvious that one tie of the heart is stronger than all those formed by the understanding: and sometimes the venerable Leslie half-questioned heaven, which would not suffer him to appropriate the good so entirely at his option.

Notwithstanding the cold and ironical manner in which Lord Westbury had received the Doctor's intelligence, he felt the deepest disgust at the discovery. He imputed to the worthy Leslie the greatest degree of voluntary blindness; and sometimes thought him, in the disclosure, only acting from an art the most refined. He studied the character of Edward; and, observing in him the pensive purity which a chaste passion induces, to cure a weakness so strongly tinged with virtue, the proud father almost tempted the youth to vice, by suddenly plunging him into the multifarious pleasures of the metro-

polis. At the age of Edward, the world has its seductions; and, perhaps, had the narrow soul of the Earl given his son time to forget one view, and form others, he would have accomplished his favourite purpose: but he was naturally despotic and impatient. The moment, therefore, that decency allowed, he abruptly addressed the young man---

“Edward,” said he, “you are, by an event which we must ever deplore, become the first in succession to splendid titles and a fine estate. I will not so far affront you, as to suppose that you will not support the former, one day, with propriety: but, at your age, there must be some points in which the judgement and experience of your father may materially avail you.---Hear me out:---There is a young peeress, of superior birth, beauty, and fortune, who, by the will of her guardians, was contracted to your brother. I have renewed the negotiation in your name, and they are willing to match her with you. As you succeed to my beloved

Clifford's advantages, so must you to his duties."

Edward's expressive countenance during this florid harangue had undergone a variety of changes; but, anxious still to qualify with his father, he struggled to keep down his feelings, and with great deference replied—"That he hoped, on a point so important to the peace of his future life, he should be allowed freedom of choice."

"Freedom of choice!" echoed the irritated peer:—"What has choice to do with wedlock, Sir? You, or I, or both, shall continually want money: and you are offered an immense fortune!—These are the fine romantic sentiments you have learnt from your silly tutor! There is hardly a young man of your rank in England consulted on the article of marriage, till the settlement is ready for signing."

"I know not what mean compliances necessity or interest may extort from other men of my age," resolutely replied

the heir, "but, as I mean to place my happiness in acting up to every social duty, I must beware how I suffer them, in the outset, to become the objects of disgust."

"Arguing on points concerning which I had previously made up my mind, never yet availed with me;--nor will it now, Edward. But do not imagine that you can dupe me with this high-flown strain of morality: I am not ignorant of your real motive, cautiously as you veil it. Leslie himself apprised me, that it is his little ignorant rustic of a daughter who renders you thus systematically disobedient."

Edward's cheek flushed, and he dropped his eyes with his usual dignity, when surprised with the news of Lord Westbury's informant. But the uprightness of his own soul told him, in one moment, that his tutor could have only that generous motive for betraying the dearest of his feelings; and this ill-judged insult, alike to them and Dr. Leslie, determined his conduct.

“ Confused as I own myself, my Lord, to find you so well informed in a matter which I thought Dr. Leslie equally ignorant of; that he should have communicated it, only heightens my veneration for that most equitable of men. Yes, my Lord, this was my secret--my only secret! This delicacy, which you are pleased to ridicule, I owe to the dear object of my choice; and her own, insures its continuance. The blush glowing on my cheek, is not for my passion, but for the injustice you have shown towards her who inspires it. Miss Leslie is--”

“ Oh!--a little angel, in your eyes, doubtless!” replied the father, with the most mortifying irony:--“ every overgrown boy thinks so of some overgrown miss. I had twenty such charmers, on whom I made, in my day, acrostics: but I did not give you any of them for a mother. Worship the cherry-cheeks of your Henrietta--but, pr’ythee, take a more suitable wife.”

“ Such as she is,” returned Edward,

kindling with pride and resentment, "my hand is plighted to her---my heart for ever her own: and I ought to thank your Lordship for thus relieving me from an oppressive silence repugnant to my nature. Henrietta became my choice when I thought virtue would be almost my sole inheritance, and her love my only distinction: if, then, a sacrifice must be exacted from me, take those advantages which you think more valuable than happiness: these I could determinately resign; but never will I give up the pride of integrity, or the pleasure of freedom."

The grace with which Lord Clifford thus asserted his rights in life, struck even the worldly, unreasonable father; who, not being able to distinguish between his own mean pride and that of inherent nobleness, only felt himself over-matched; and never, perhaps, saw his son with so much partiality, as while he was absolutely contradicted by him. Simulation, however, came to the aid of the one, and the relief of the other; and

they parted without any further difference.

After various efforts on the part of the Earl to change his son's sentiments, he concluded that time only could do so. Wholly to remove him from the object of his passion, seemed the next best step; and he now proposed to Edward to make the grand tour. The youth had already learnt to distrust his father most when he appeared condescending and kind; yet knew not how to avoid, in this instance, compliance. All was hastily arranged: and the gentleman who had brought home the body of the young Lord whom his cares could not guard, was engaged to attend his brother. Lord Westbury himself accompanied the travellers as far as Rochester: and thus, having secured the heir, drove back with relays to Arlington Court, that he might be equally certain as to Miss Leslie.

The haste and caution of this whole arrangement, confirmed Edward in the belief that it was done to separate him

for ever from Henrietta: and since he had not yielded in any instance, he rightly concluded that the next attack would be made upon the will of the young lady; for which, probably, both fathers only waited till the sea was between him and his beloved. For this danger he could find but one remedy--an immediate marriage: and this measure appeared the more necessary, as an act was then agitating which would put the whole power of choice in the bosoms of the parents; at least for so long a term as might wholly alienate the affection of one party, and thus ruin the happiness of the other. Nevertheless, it was the wish of the young Lord to comply with the views of his father, the moment that he had completed his own.

On weighing the whole of his situation, he thought it possible to effect the marriage suddenly and secretly. As suddenly he purposed to return to his governor; and, as soon as they had passed over the channel, from the other side he meant

to announce to both fathers the step he had taken ; and submit it to them when he should come home, and acknowledge his bride. Of the concurrence of Henrietta in this decisive measure he assured himself, when once he made it obvious to her, that parents, whose views were in every other instance so distinct, had unhappily agreed to separate them for ever.

On dismissing the servants who had attended him in London, but were useless on the Continent, Edward selected one, whom he commissioned to follow, at a limited distance, wherever he went, that he might be ready to join him at a given signal. In the interim, the man was supplied with money and directions to procure the necessary disguise. From pursuit, the young Lord had every danger to apprehend ; as he soon discovered that his actions were strictly observed, and his hours, even at night, hardly ever his own. The more desperate his hope became, the more determined, however, was his will. On the evening that followed the depar-

ture of his father, he broke the deep rêverie into which his governor, as well as himself, appeared to have fallen, by this spirited address: "It is with concern, Sir, that I am obliged to perceive the way my father has chosen to make the respectable office you have undertaken humiliating to yourself and disgusting to me: he has invested you with a power over my conduct which he has no right to give, nor could you exert, were I determined to set it at defiance. Why either my father, or you, should expect that submission from me which neither of you would have demanded of my elder brother, is a question that I need not pursue. Vain, as well as unreasonable, will you both find that expectation! A tie of honour, a duty due to my heart, over-rules with me all other considerations: nor will I, thus circumstanced, cross the channel. I do not mean to absent myself from you for any length of time: and, if you rely on my word that I will speedily return, you shall see how I respect it;—if not, I shall

escape from you, had you the eyes of Argus: and the consciousness of integrity will be insufficient to acquit you in the judgement of a haughty Peer; who, incensed as he may, for a time, be at my conduct, will soon have a thousand reasons for making the best of that, and then will probably turn his resentment wholly to you. But, even if you have the good fortune to preserve my father's regard, how know you that he will live to reward you? and the good he holds out, it may be in my power ultimately to bestow. I am of a disposition neither volatile nor ungenerous, and the certain heir of every advantage vested in the Earl of Westbury. Choose, at once, between his friendship and mine; for both it is impossible you should keep. I do not ask you to co-operate in my designs: I only request that you will not impede them. If you do not consent to await my return, at least be ignorant of my absence for four-and-twenty hours."

Mr. White, whose hopes of prefer-

ment in the church, through Lord Westbury's patronage, bound him to an observance of that nobleman's will, felt the force of the young heir's spirited argument, and all the delicacy of his own situation. However disposed he might be to fulfil the duty for which he had engaged, he had too often seen his patron incensed, unreasonable, and obstinate, not to think it possible that he might, by crossing the views of the young Lord, remain a curate all his life. He retired to bed to think of it.

The moment the heir quitted his governor, he jumped into a chaise and four, with which his confidential servant waited within a hundred yards of the inn; and by the morning he was many miles on the way to his beloved parsonage; having expedited his own journey, and retarded that of whoever might pursue him, by every method which liberality could suggest.

Familiar, by long residence, with the country near Arlington Court, as soon

as he reached its precincts, Edward wrapt his servant in his great-coat, and placed him by his side in the chaise as its master, while, hid behind the silk blinds, he himself escaped every eye. On approaching a well-known copse, of such bad repute among the vulgar that not one human being but made a circuit rather than pass through it, Edward jumped from the chaise; taking with him a bundle, which the servant had procured; whom he appointed to bring the chaise to him again at midnight. On surveying his new wardrobe, the young lover found that the man had, very adroitly, selected every appurtenance of an itinerant fiddler.—In these ragged habiliments he equipped himself with much satisfaction; and, rubbing his face with ochre, and his chin with a composition which gave him the appearance of having a carrotty beard, he tucked his luxuriant auburn locks under an old woollen striped night-cap; over which he clapped a hat, so scalloped, both by time and use, as to make it impossible that even his own father

should have guessed at him, had they met. Limping towards the house of Dr. Leslie, he employed himself in tuning an instrument so very execrable that he almost despaired of extracting from it any resemblance of an air. The nearer he approached, the more powerful became the pulsations of his heart: when one of those little incidents which the most watchful prudence includes not in its calculations, seemed very likely to defeat all his caution, and publish to the whole family his disguise. A faithful little spaniel, which he had reared, and, at Miss Leslie's own desire, left behind, in her care, lay sleeping in the court-yard; when the sound of the wretched fiddle roused him. Barking furiously, Romeo flew towards the intruder: but, by that instinct which leaves reason behind to wonder in silence, the animal instantaneously recognised his friend; and leaped about and around him, with every mark of fond acknowledgement. Lord Clifford sought in vain, in a low tone, to prevent his springing one instant to his

shoulder, and the next crouching at his feet: every sound of his voice excited only new marks of delight; and to chide the animal, was to announce himself to the family. At that early hour of the morning, the servants, however, luckily had other occupations; and the dog at length, wearied by his own transports, lay quietly down on the stone seat, where the anxious youth sat hammering out a tune suitable to the occasion.

The time he played without seeing any one, had created some alarm for the health of Henrietta; when he suddenly cast his eyes upon her, coming up the lane on horseback, accompanied by her father. They were very near Edward, before, in his confusion, he recollected that Dr. Leslie would as surely question as relieve him in his mendicant capacity. His only resource was to stoop for a handful of pebbles, with which he filled his mouth. But Dr. Leslie, lost in a rêverie, of which he was probably the object, passed him regardless; while his

daughter, in return for an humble bow, graciously promised to send him an alms, and, at the same moment, called away Romeo ; who, looking up at her very composedly, once more laid his head against the side of his master.

Not daring to trust himself to the observation of whatever inquisitive domestic Miss Leslie might send out, Edward made an abrupt retreat to the copse ; where he painfully found that he must linger through a day so important to himself and his beloved. It was true, that the servant he had brought might have been employed to address Miss Leslie ; but Edward was well assured that she was guarded ; and the smallest imprudence on the part of any secondary person might more effectually defeat his project, than either rashness or delay on his own.

As it was now become but too probable that the news of his escape from his governor, even if that gentleman had given him the four-and-twenty hours stipulated,

might reach Arlington before he could profit by the occasion, the young lover prepared his mind for the most desperate emergency. Midnight at length came; and, having made his way into Dr. Leslie's garden, he touched Henrietta's window with the customary signal: this had been repeated several times; when a hoarse masculine voice demanded "who was there?" Lord Clifford now made the distressing discovery that his mistress had been removed from that chamber; nor could he be certain in which she was lodged. Another long and miserable night elapsed in a thousand uncertain projects. Convinced that he had trifled away the hours which he could never recal, and must now resolve on defying his fate and his father, the young lover with inexpressible feelings saw the day break, and retreated once more to his copse, possessed of some of the finest flowers which the garden afforded: these he formed into several nosegays; and around the most beautiful wrapt a note, conjuring Miss Leslie, if ever she meant

to behold him again, to be in the alcove at midnight. Thus prepared, he returned to keep a watch upon the house, resolved, that, if any attempt should be made to remove Henrietta, he would rush out and assert his own rights in her. All, however, seemed tranquil still at the parsonage; and Edward was cheered with the hope that his governor had sided with him, and of course the two fathers concluded him now to be on the other side of the channel. This pleasing idea was confirmed, when he saw Dr. Leslie mount his horse very composedly, and take the road to Arlington. Now, or never, the young Lord felt that he must attract the attention of his mistress; who, having looked after her father till the trees concealed him, took her work-bag, and sat down at the window.

Edward again occupied his stone seat at the gate, and attempted to scrape a well-known tune upon his lamentable instrument. Romeo once more hailed the musician, and by his transports first at-

tracted the attention of the young lady to the mendicant. The air then struck her; and in perturbation she ran hastily into the court. As hastily did the careful housekeeper run after; who was charged never to let her out of sight. Confused, alarmed, astonished, overjoyed, Miss Leslie cast her eyes on Edward, and knew him;—but not a word dared either utter. Humbly tendering her a nosegay, he tore away a small part of the paper surrounding it, and thus drew her observation to his object. She gave him a glance which showed she fully understood him: and notwithstanding Mrs. Ellison reprobated her taste, for taking out of the hands of a beggar worse flowers than she could gather in her own garden, Henrietta placed the bouquet in her bosom, and gave the musician an humble donation to prevent all suspicion. After she was seated once more at the window, the guard left her; when, eagerly kissing her hand to Edward, Henrietta made him unintelligible signs, which nevertheless he

perceived that it was of importance to him to comprehend: to guess at their precise meaning was impossible: that he should immediately be gone, he however understood; and into the copse he once more retreated; where, though he had hardly any other support than that which hope afforded, so invigorating is a pursuit that it converted hardships into happiness.

Mr. White, in the interim, having revolved the discourse of Lord Clifford, and not doubting but that it would be followed by his journey, resolved not to quit his bed; from which in the morning he summoned a surgeon to bleed him; and, by occupying the servants, together with alarming them, escaped an early information of the young heir's absence, as well as the task of announcing it to his father; which task, from his incapacity to use his right arm, devolved upon the medical gentleman he had called in. A servant was sent to Arlington express, with the letter; but either the young Lord had

bribed people to retard the groom's journey, or he voluntarily lingered, from the natural indulgence common people always show in the cause of lovers: certain it is, that he delivered not the letter to Lord Westbury till that night closed on which Edward relied for the success of his plan. Mr. White's information being written hastily, and without a date, Lord Westbury never recollected the possibility of a delay on the part of the messenger; therefore was led to suppose that Edward had no advantage in point of time, and that an immediate arrangement with Doctor Leslie would effectually disappoint his disobedient heir; of whose flight he might then appear ignorant, as the lover would have no choice but to return. A hasty summons from Arlington found Doctor Leslie just going to bed; who got into the carriage without giving any new caution concerning his daughter: rather imputing the alarm to some whim of the old Lord's, than any thing that related to the young lovers. By thus taking the

careful father from his own house in the moment of danger, Lord Westbury in reality facilitated those measures which he was employed in endeavouring to prevent.

Doctor Leslie, concluding he should not return that night, ordered all his family to go to bed; and they had hardly retreated thither, before Edward scaled the garden wall;---but he sought in vain for his mistress in the alcove. Obligated to risque approaching the house, he perceived her at the window whence he had so often descended; and thus found his project obstructed in the only way he had not guessed at. In this perplexity, he conjured her to try the cord, still in the seat of the window; and represented, that, on the turf beneath, she could not be hurt if she fell. A tremor which she could not conquer would, he found, render his entreaties vain. Hastily he then flew for a low ladder, kept by the gardener to cut the vines: and as he dragged this along, for all his strength was but equal to the exertion, he slightly touched the case-

ment of a room where a servant was lying; who, unluckily, started from his sleep, and, by the faint light of the stars, perceived a man raising the ladder against Miss Leslie's window. The startled groom rushed into the hall, and, snatching a blunderbuss, returned in silence to watch at the casement. Edward, in the interim, had mounted, and made his timid mistress sensible, that she must at once fly with him, or face the rage of both their fathers. She had put herself into his arms, and he was cautiously descending, when the man, mistaking, by the whiteness of her garments, his young lady for a bundle of plunder with which the thief was making off, instantaneously fired; and, on seeing the lovers fall, ran to call up his fellow-servants. Henrietta was senseless in the arms of Lord Clifford; and terror almost deprived him of strength, when he found that she was wounded. A gleam of moonshine showed, however, that the blood, now streaming copiously over

both, flowed only from her arm; and he began to hope that the blow might not prove mortal. Bathing her pale face with his tears, he entreated her to collect strength and fortitude to reach the chaise, that she might immediately be conveyed to a surgeon, and afterwards married.

The bold step she had now taken, did not allow Henrietta to hesitate; and, feeble as she was, she had already consented to follow Edward through life, when a noise both heard behind the wall, and the motion of another carriage besides that waiting for them, obliged Lord Clifford to bear his precious burden into the alcove; for to get farther was, he found, impossible. Eager to employ the only moment he might be able to command, he tore her gown to bandage up her arm. A sudden confusion of indistinct voices increased the death-like sickness incident to a wound; and Miss Leslie again swooned away; clasping Edward, and imperfectly calling him her love, her husband, her protector, her only

friend. His impassioned soul replied to every endearing appellation; and, pressing his burning cheek to the pale one already, to his imagination, iced over by the chilness of death, he swore to deserve them all. That their intention had transpired, was now past a doubt; for the noise, which every instant increased, came rolling towards the alcove. Several surrounding flambeaux soon showed Lord Westbury, as he hastened down the walk: but, undaunted at the sight of him, Edward formed, instantaneously, his resolution. All the fortitude which Miss Leslie had lost, seemed to be added to that of her lover: he sat down, that he might throw his left arm round her lifeless form, and rest the head, so beloved, upon his bosom; while, drawing a pistol from his pocket, he firmly grasped it with his right hand, and remained in an attitude of desperate calmness which such a situation as his own alone could give to any man. As soon as the cavalcade came near enough to hear and know him, Ed-

ward commanded them to halt, at their peril; and he was rigidly obeyed; for his voice had in a manner transfixed the whole body. In the agitation of the moment, the information of the servant who had shown his troublesome valour had been so imperfect, as to persuade Lord Westbury that Edward was the victim of his rash intention: but the torches soon pointed out to Doctor Leslie the bloody, and apparently lifeless, form of his daughter. To rush forward, was the first impulse of a heart so tender; but Edward again rooted him to the earth, by letting him see the pistol; which he, however, only pointed to his own bosom. The worthy man stopt in a moment, and almost sunk into the arms of the servant nearest to him.

Even this short interval had enabled the haughty peer to collect himself; and, observing that his son was unhurt, he commanded him to lay aside these romantic flights, and restore the poor girl, whom they had almost killed, to her father.

“No, my Lord,” cried Edward: “bound as we are to reverence our parents, the compact is mutual; and we in turn may claim tenderness. While you remembered that you were a father, I did not forget that I was a son: when you exact an unlimited duty, you cancel the bond, and oblige me to assert my own rights! Can you give me more than happiness?—Why, then, would you deny me that? In these arms is encircled the form of the lovely creature whom I adore; and they can, at least, enable me follow her, whom they could not enable me to preserve. My soul is tortured by oppression!—Swear then, therefore, if I am worth a wish, that Henrietta shall be mine: living or dead, my heart is wedded to her. I renounce, I abhor those external honours which have overwhelmed me with calamity: but never will I part with the angel whom my faithful heart demands. Even at this terrible moment, with her lifeless form resting on my bosom, arrayed in the abject garb of beggary, I

am, in my own eyes, more truly estimable and dignified, than at the one which invested me with those hereditary rights that ought, as I am told, to annihilate the most pure and virtuous of all our passions. Speak at once, my Lord!--an instant decides the fate of the family!--Declare Henrietta Leslie at once your daughter, or Edward Clifford is no longer your son."

The burning tears which fell from the cheek of her lover on that of Henrietta, caused her to raise her eyes: she turned them languidly towards her father, and roused, in one moment, to agony, those fine affections which she had hardly ever before awakened. Dr. Leslie wrung the hand of Lord Westbury; who, still impenetrable, urged every servant, by turns, to seize Edward: the whole train, however, gradually receded; nor could any power induce a single being to tempt the despairing lover. Alone, without strength to effect his own will, and rebuked by the total secession of all around him, the ir-

ritated peer at length, unwillingly, began a capitulation: but Edward swerved not from his demand: he insisted on being at once married to Miss Leslie, should her wound be pronounced mortal; nor would wave the ceremony for more than a year, should it not be dangerous. The promise of the old Lord having at last been solemnly given, Edward threw away his pistol; and Dr. Leslie flew to his daughter, fondly sharing with her lover in the toil of conveying her once more to the unlucky chamber.

To account for the opportune arrival of the two fathers, we must follow Dr. Leslie to Arlington; where he found Lord Westbury in a fury, which he attempted not to control, at the flight of his son. The object of that was too obvious not to make Dr. Leslie take fire at his scornful and vehement expressions. High words arose between the fathers: but the sense of honour over-ruling personal pride, the Doctor resolved, by a great effort over his own feelings, to

leave Edward, once more, at Lord Westbury's disposal, by giving to the peer, for a time, the guardianship of his daughter. This equitable offer was eagerly accepted; and the chariot, yet waiting, carried them both back, that Lord Westbury himself might convoy the young lady to Arlington. The lane had hardly breadth for two carriages; and when the chariot ran against one drawn up in the shade, no doubt remained of Edward's arrival: the attending servants took possession of it; and, had the lovers escaped from the house in safety, they would only have become prisoners. Lord Westbury exulted in their disappointment and his own success; while Dr. Leslie maintained a painful, but prudent, silence. On reaching the iron gates of the parsonage, they rang many times in vain: lights now appeared, and now vanished, in every part of the house; but not one domestic paid the least attention to the bell, or their reiterated thunderings at the gate. A dreadful feeling came over both fathers, which

neither could utter. Lord Westbury's groom, having at length climbed into the court-yard, gave the carriage entrance. At the hall-door, every servant at once rushed before them; and their pallid looks of horror prefaced the dreadful intelligence, that William had just shot a thief in the garden. Resentment expired in Lord Westbury at the sound. Both fathers felt, at once, every agony concentrated in that appellation; and, while cold drops faintly fell from their foreheads, each muttered, "Edward! rash, unhappy Edward!" In a moment more, they learnt that no one had yet searched the garden; and a faint hope arising that the youth might not be dead, they called for flambeaux, and hastened to explore it: yet, so inveterate is prejudice in a narrow and cold heart, that no sooner did Lord Westbury perceive his own son uninjured, than he resolved to over-rule him, whatever became of the wounded daughter of Dr. Leslie; while that benignant man, on the contrary, felt no

augmentation of anguish at finding the misfortune peculiarly his own, since Edward had appeared to him to have been the victim.

Henrietta's wound was, on examination, found to be dangerous only from the loss of blood, which threatened a syncope: but, as Dr. Leslie would not allow the surgeon to admit even this danger to any one but himself, lest it should supply to Edward an excuse for further disobedience, the old Lord called for his carriage, and coolly summoned his son to go home with him. This Edward positively refused; although, as Dr. Leslie remained by his daughter's bed-side, and equally declined to see either nobleman, the stay of Lord Clifford in his house seemed almost obtrusive.

During his solitary ride, the old peer meditated at leisure on the incidents of the night: nor did he find any thing decisive in the promise which he had been obliged to make; for, with his usual worldly caution, he had prefaced it with

“ if you continue still to desire it :” nor did he doubt but that, in the course of a year, if he could get the young man to the continent, he could find, or make, some cause which would reduce one of the lovers, and it did not signify to him which, to decline that very union both now so eagerly sought.

The same reflexions soon occurred to the agitated mind of Edward, together with the conviction of an indelicate, perhaps irremediable, error on his part. Attached to Dr. Leslie by every tie of the heart, in the consciousness of influence he had omitted to exact alike from that gentleman his solemn consent to the marriage, which he felt, too late, that he ought to have obtained from each father at the same moment and in the same manner. The conduct of the Doctor made it obvious that he resented this omission ; and to have wounded the feelings of a man whose failings were but the excesses of virtue, aggravated the oversight in the eyes of Edward. He had, indeed, hurt the feel-

ings of Dr. Leslie ; who, annihilated in a manner by the being he loved best, shrunk into himself, with a pang equal to that which wrung his bosom when first he saw Henrietta bleeding in the arms of her lover. Those moments he could snatch from the sense of her suffering, were all spent in fortifying his resolution to treat with coldness the young man, who, presuming on his attachment, had stolen like a thief into his humble home, and, even at the fearful conjuncture when he had carried death almost into the bosom of his daughter, had shown no consideration for himself. Perhaps it was not the least of his chagrins, that his consent had not been extorted ; for well could he calculate upon the mean advantage which Lord Westbury might make of his high and generous spirit.

All the good man's resolution was, however, necessary, when, on opening Henrietta's chamber-door in the morning, he found Edward waiting there, wan, humble, and exhausted. " Pardon this intrusion,

dearest, best of friends," cried he, attempting to forestal a speech which the indignant look of the Doctor rendered very alarming, "and deign to hear me for a moment!"——"How have I been mistaken in you, young man!" returned the irritated father: "is your first exploit in life to be the ruin of his domestic comfort who almost lived for, and in, you? Have you inherited the vices of your brother with his title? and am I to have no other recompense for my cares, than the conviction that you were unworthy of them?" "O spare me, Sir! I conjure you, spare me!" said the youth, covered with generous confusion—"at least till I have explained myself. I have almost from childhood loved the angel whom my unhappy rashness last night endangered; and should have trusted to time, had you not discovered and betrayed me. That severity of principle which induced you to communicate to my father the mutual attachment I thought unknown to yourself, has almost undone me. The reproofs which

tenderness might have given force to, his violence rendered vain. I saw in his effort to get me out of the kingdom, a poor, unworthy artifice; and know, that, had I gone, I should never have been allowed to return while my Henrietta continued unmarried. To what, then, could I resort? Could I come to you, and supplicate for a consent which I was convinced you would think it virtue to withhold? If, in any moment of my life, I have acted contrary to your wishes, impute the fault to that deep veneration I must ever entertain for your principles. I have, by an unforeseen incident which fills my soul with affliction, extorted the consent of my harsh, tyrannical father: but, as your conduct has always been different towards me, so shall mine to you. I could not, before his face, follow the dictates of my heart, in falling thus at your feet, to sue both for your pardon and consent. To you, no humiliation can be too great. My honoured friend, my more than father, I now submit my fate to your decision;

and on the next sentence you utter must depend the happiness or misery of my whole life! Pity my past, my present affliction; and confirm me in the virtue to which I have been trained through your cares, by giving me, in your daughter, its fairest image! Yet let me not bias your equitable nature: so full, so absolute, shall be my obedience, that I here solemnly vow to make your will my law. I will sacrifice myself to this detestable rank, which, it seems, I am not at liberty to reject, if you say I ought to do so; but if, on the contrary, your fiat should crown my wishes, you shall find the enlargement of my views shall only strengthen and extend my virtues; and may contemplate, with a pleasure worthy your own pure nature, the happiness you have formed for those most dear to you."

Dr. Leslie, whose eyes could hardly resist the sight of Edward humbled and mournful, felt every word of this address touch some more tender string of his soul; till, struck beyond concealment with its

elevated and noble conclusion, his heart conquered at once, and he hastily faltered out—"Accomplished young man! son of my cares, son of my wishes! accept those titles, together with that you demand from me. May the generous love which induces you thus to bind yourself to my daughter, find in her a happiness as full as my consent, as lasting as your own merit! Oh, Edward!" sighed the good man, pausing, and fondly resting his exhausted frame on the youth's shoulder; "Oh, my Edward! now, methinks, at this moment, would I die--now, at this blessed moment, when my conscience is satisfied, my God is satisfied, and you, my son, are satisfied."

The joy that flowed into the hearts of both, was, however, something checked by the sight of Lord Westbury's carriage driving up the lane. The early visit of the peer was less to inquire for the wounded young lady, than to avail himself of Edward's oversight, which he, too, had recollected; and, hoping to arrive in time

to guard the Doctor from giving his consent, he thought he should keep the power still in his own hands. He could not conceal his displeasure, when he found himself too late. To his insolent and acrimonious censures, Dr. Leslie replied, with that openness and benignity which ever characterised him, " I presume not to judge of your future views, my Lord; but you talk to a man who knows not to temporise, much less to deceive. Worlds would not have bribed me to unite the hands of our children without your consent; but, when I saw that given, I had no motive for withholding mine. May I suffer a sorrow like that I must inflict, when I trifle with the peace of those who rest upon the security of my word! Yet do not conclude that I wish to intrude a poor and humble young creature into a family of high rank, before time shall have formed her character, or have proved her lover's constancy. Pursue your former plan, my Lord, and send your son abroad. I dare trust to his prin-

ciples: and the certainty that he has bound us both, while I shall guard for him the object of his wishes, may incline him to conform to your pleasure."

Small as this concession seemed, Lord Westbury caught at it; and availed himself of Dr. Leslie's influence to dispose Edward to go abroad. When urged on this subject, what a test of Edward's reverence for Dr. Leslie did he find compliance: nevertheless, he did not hold himself entitled to dispute the will of both his fathers, concerning any secondary object; and he only requested to see his Henrietta well enough to leave her chamber, before he quitted England.

With the prospect of having every desire which pride, vanity, or love, could suggest, gratified, Miss Leslie scarce felt any pain from her wound. Always attended by an ardent, a generous lover, and watched over by a father now first and fondly indulgent, she enjoyed days of felicity rarely granted to suffering mortality. As the bloom slowly returned to

her cheek, Edward almost bewailed its beauty ; for it was to him the signal of departure. A thousand times he fondly recommended her to the tenderness of his father---nay, even to that of her own : and the effort he found it to tear himself away from the parsonage, only more deeply impressed the passion which Lord Westbury thus hoped to extinguish.

Lord Clifford hastily ran over Italy and Switzerland, that he might return to Paris ; whence he every day vainly expected to be recalled. Dr. Leslie, during this time, was seized with a complaint which at once announced the stroke of mortality : retaining his reason, however, to the last, he committed his daughter to the guardianship of Lord Westbury, with the very small portion which he had saved for her. To Lord Clifford, he could only dictate a farewell letter ; in which he conjured him ever to act with that uprightness which had hitherto characterised him ; and should his heart, in due time, still claim the desolate orphan whom it

was his fate so soon to leave, he bequeathed to him, with her, the parting prayers and blessings of a dying father: if, on the contrary, time or circumstances should have effected any alteration in his sentiments, that father conjured him never to wed her from a principle of false honour; since, if it should be possible for affliction to extend beyond mortality, a union formed from such a motive would disturb him in the grave.

To Henrietta, her anxious parent recommended a dutiful and observant conduct towards Lord Westbury; who had offered to receive her into his house and protection. This promise he kept: and the young orphan gave her absent lover such favourable accounts of the kindness and consideration she met with from her guardian, as made Edward afraid to follow the first impulse, which bade him fly to become so himself in the character of her husband. By the blind confidence of Dr. Leslie, this could not now be effected till she became of age, or his father, as

her guardian, concurred. In truth, that father had no intention ever to concur. Having, by an event upon which he could not calculate, got Henrietta wholly into his power, he had only to consider where he should find what he called a suitable match for the proud parson's daughter. A young lawyer, who was of necessity often obliged to confer with her in establishing the Doctor's will, and realising all his little property, appeared to her guardian the very man he wanted: but he now knew his son's vehemence too well to be rash; and as that young lover overwhelmed his father, in every letter, with grateful acknowledgements for his kindness to his plighted bride, it was obvious that he sought, by a confidence apparently implicit, to bind him to the precise performance of the memorable compact.

Lord Westbury no sooner had the young lady under his roof, than he studied how to interrupt her hitherto unrestrained correspondence with his son: and, by undue influence, obtaining the letters of

both, he kept back all of either which might sooth or gratify the other; while those which disappointment and irritation dictated, faithfully reached the party addressed. Unused to incur the censure and reproaches of Edward, Miss Leslie soon began to doubt whether he did not couch under these a secret alienation of heart, and a wish to abrogate the contract. Exulting in that success which the tearful eyes and pale cheeks of the young lady soon announced to the Earl, he was led prematurely to countenance the addresses of the young lawyer, whom, in the arrangement of her father's affairs, Henrietta was often obliged to converse with. Disgusted at pretensions she dared not utterly reject, as she now perceived that they were sanctioned by her guardian, she had discernment enough to discover, in his breach of promise, a proof of her lover's honour; and had no difficulty, when she chose another channel of conveyance, to dispatch a letter to Lord Clifford, fully descriptive of her cruel situation.

Edward, vehement in all his feelings, did not lose a moment in hastening to England, and posting to Arlington, where he found his father a corpse ! All his arbitrary, ambitious schemes, his pride, and his wishes, gone in one moment, with the breath out of his body ! and the unprotected, bewildered Henrietta left to accomplish hers, without any restriction ; for the old Lord had so little calculated on this sudden call to the land of spirits, as to have neglected making any will ; thus facilitating that marriage which it had been the whole business of his latter days to prevent.

Edward felt the pang of nature—but he owned, too, the charm of love ; and, perceiving that he could not with decency propose to Miss Leslie to remain under his roof, he thought that the least impropriety he could be guilty of, was to marry her secretly. To punish the presumption of the lawyer, he made choice of him to draw the marriage settlements ; and the bride, whose hand the young Earl held, en-

joyed the blushes which their mutual presence occasioned to her *quondam* admirer.

In the mystery of this union, the young Lord Westbury found the freedom of marriage combined with the spirit of courtship. He saw with regret that period approach, when an avowal of the tie, already universally understood, would oblige him to lead his wife into the gay world: it was, however, a respect due both to her and himself, to take her to court. Fashion was for ever exercised, to receive that grace from consummate beauty which leads fools to follow it. Lady Westbury charmed the whole world; but, alas! that world, too, charmed her! She became the model of taste, the pride of every public place, and the object of a thousand paragraphs. From that moment to this, she has maintained the frivolous pre-eminence.

It is long before an impassioned heart will, even to itself, admit a fault in the object adored; but, at length, the understanding will have its turn. Lord Westbury, with wonder, beheld, in her

whom he had made the companion of his whole life, a creature whose limited views were directed to but one object--herself! Alas! that object had, for many years, alike engrossed his whole soul! But his intellectual and discriminating powers were only engrossed, not circumscribed; and, in the calm hours of a decided fate, began to extend through the natural and moral world, and every path of science. After many efforts to modify the pursuits of his wife, the enlightened lover became painfully sensible that his own could never be hers, and that to adopt those in which she delighted, would make him useless, if not contemptible. Insensibly the mismatched pair separated in their choice of associates, and rarely met, except in their chamber; when the pregnancy of Lady Westbury at once awakened in the bosom of her Lord the only feeling that can increase love. He grew urgent with her to withdraw from the dissipated circles in which she passed her time, that she might recruit her constitution at Arlington, be-

fore the hour of suffering came; but she declared herself, on hearing this proposal, absolutely shocked at his inhumanity!--
“What! would he drag his wretched wife from the only place where she could obtain proper assistance!” Lord Westbury ventured, with great tenderness, to hint that she might, at his seat, find as good aid as his mother, or her own, ever had: but might she not, even there, command the best in London? He was obliged to remain satisfied with her declaration, that no poor woman, in her wretched circumstances, ought to go above a few miles from town! What husband can be urgent on so interesting a subject! Lord Westbury procured a villa immediately, at Richmond; where his lady was at once surrounded with her London set of friends, as she called the throng of fashionable idlers, who, almost without intending to do ill, sap the morals of the young and thoughtless, by instructing them how to lose the time which virtue knows so well how to employ. To divert Lady West-

bury's thoughts from her approaching odious confinement, they led her to play deep, and with interest. At once the most pernicious, though the least dreaded, of all the vices, took hold of her uncultivated, unoccupied mind, and reigned there ever after.

Too late did Lord Westbury discover the dangerous resource against apprehension which his lady had found out; too late did he shut his doors against those who had undermined his last chance for domestic felicity: the evil was already past remedy; and Lady Westbury was still in that state when fond husbands always yield much. After a vain struggle on his part, he became glad to see her tears dried again at the card-table, when the tenderest pleadings of reason only made them flow. Alas! he daily felt, that beautiful wives, like fine pictures, are for the many, not the individual; and can only gratify the vanity, not satisfy the heart. How deeply susceptible was his of this sorrowful conviction!

A little girl was soon after added to the family, and seized upon the half-extinguished affections of her father. As it was no longer possible for the Lady to be surrounded with people whom her Lord despised, he eagerly embraced the touching interval, to attempt recalling the youthful and mistaken Henrietta to her duties, by leading her to discover that those alone could supply her pure or lasting pleasures: but she had already studied the tone of that world by which she had been seduced.. Would any one understand what has banished all refined pleasures, annihilated those decorums which once preserved purity to society, and even struck at the sublime and awful form of Virtue herself--it is, Banter!--that sprightly and deformed imp, produced, in an evil hour, by Wit and Humour; yet bearing no resemblance to the first, but an unpolite freedom of ridicule; nor to the last, but a grotesque shrug, and an impertinent grin. How strange is it, that a monster like this should be allowed to become the tyrant

of polished society ; for in few instances will either Religion or Morality venture to cope with it. No : we laugh ourselves out of all that is right, first—and into all that is wrong, afterwards ! Nor does the fascinating fiend resign its prey, till, laid early, perhaps, on the bed of sickness, or at once approaching to the hour of death, we look with other eyes upon its playful frolics ; or brood, in sad silence, over scenes from whence it is forever flown.

Without any other qualification for bantering, than a beautiful mouth and easy manners, Lady Westbury availed herself of that fashionable acquirement to laugh at her Lord for meddling in nursery concerns. And sometimes, cramming the little stranger into his arms, with strokes of ridicule, which are not the less offensive because they are undeserved, she would give him leave “to render the young squaller a pattern of female excellence, and the very model of himself, provided he did not shut up a woman of her age, figure, and condition, to dandle miss, or

pore over all those musty essays upon education with which he had been pleased to litter her *boudoir*. What would the world think, did they know that he managed the nurse-maids; or expected to save the expense of one, by bestowing the office upon his wife!"

Lord Westbury answered only with a sigh; and pressing the babe, who was her mother's image, to his bosom, secretly prayed that feature might prove the only likeness between them. Another year revolved in the same course of (to him) insipid amusements; when the Lady again gave birth to a daughter. Disgust now became the sad consequence of secret alienation. Lord Westbury dined, and spent half his life, in St. James's Street; while his Lady, having taken the whole morning to recover, in her bed, the fatigues of the previous evening's pleasure, revived as the day closed, and again issued out to encounter the same fatigue. Different chambers completed the separation: and this fashionable pair have, already,

almost outlived the recollection of that passion which once made them both brave every obstacle.

Deprived of social happiness at home, Lord Westbury was soon courted into seeking it abroad: and the worthless part of the women of fashion, who now rank little higher than the courtezans whom they emulate, knew all the value of their prize.

Enormous to society at large has the progress of luxury proved: nor was domestic happiness less endangered, when, for the convenience of commerce, excellent roads, and admirable accommodations in travelling, made the metropolis accessible, no less to the idle than the active. Those splendid mansions in Pall Mall, whose illuminated windows catch the eye of every thoughtful pedestrian, are often, in reality, dens of ruin! monuments of misery! Into these, with a light step and easy fortune, too often darts, in pursuit of luxury and pleasure, the husband, the lover, the father, the brother,

yet new to the world, and wholly inexperienced: but, who ever quits them with a step as light! how few with as easy a fortune! Appetites pampered to depravity, or tastes indulged to impoverishment, are the least evils which follow the habit of resorting to these elegant clubs. The facility with which money, in these places, buys every thing, soon makes every thing indifferent or disgustful. The simple, but exquisite, sources of enjoyment in the soul, retain their power only by those privations which circumstances impose, or reason exacts from us. That we are ordained to purchase, by forbearance or exertion, every good worth having, is very evident, if we only consider that nothing we term so is at once within our call or reach. Man might envy the bird that, shaking its beautiful plumage, finds itself drest, or feasts upon the ripened cherry that invites its little bill, did he not know that the reflecting wretch, whose eye pursues the gay interloper, alone can prepare

for that, or himself, the future good, or guard against the future evil.

Yet, let me not be thought to impute vice to Lord Westbury, because he became gay on ceasing to be happy. Youth and inexperience may be fairly pleaded in palliation of his errors. A love, like his, excited by the senses, flies from reason, which would refine and correct it, to take shelter in the heart, which it gradually vitiates by extravagant demands for a felicity human nature perhaps affords not. If to this impulse parental opposition is added, the lover loses the whole benefit of his understanding, and with more than common rashness decides his fate. Perhaps the best way to limit the indiscreet attachments of young people would be, to allow them as unrestrained an intercourse with each other as may consist with the respect and guard due to the lady, in places where no co-operating agitation of the feelings should induce that hasty decision from which there is

no future appeal. Were this the custom, half the eternal passions of nineteen would evaporate before the parties reached the age of one-and-twenty; while those who had been once so mistaken, would learn to distrust their own judgement—a benefit the value of which is beyond calculation.

Neither would I acquit Lord Westbury of blame, even since his romantic marriage. His own boundless adulation of a weak, though lovely, object, perhaps caused that vanity which matrimony soon made obvious. Yet, O how bitter must have been the punishment, when he was obliged to discover in the creature whom he thought unequalled, only an arrogant beauty; devoured with the most disgusting and incurable of all our passions—self-admiration! Nor could it be a less disappointment to the lady, to observe, that the only man not blindly devoted to her charms was the very one to whom they were wholly appropriated. Without considering, that, but for him, they would never have been distinguished, she haughtily assumes the

advantages she derives; and laments, through life, that an early and indiscreet marriage limited her conquests.

I have already had the opportunity to remark, that few girls brought up in absolute retirement make good wives. The world is new and alluring to such; and they early learn to encroach upon the fondness of the husband. If, through either wisdom or weariness, he ventures to limit his indulgence to his bride, she considers herself as ill-treated; and, setting his power at defiance, finally loses his affections, only from having possessed them in too high a degree. Nay, there are those who think themselves justified in greater errors, by what they call cruelty. I do not include, in this number, the lovely Lady Westbury: she is merely a giddy, fascinating, fashionable trifler, on whom every gallant man has, occasionally, cast an eye; but as each presents to her merely a flattering mirror, she admires her own image alike in all, and beholds the crowd with but one sentiment—self-love!

Far be it, however, from me to suppose, that, by retaining the single virtue of chastity, a woman may hold herself exempted from inferior duties. It is not enough to say that we do no ill in this life—we were sent into it to do good: and Lady Westbury has not only her own faults to answer for, but a portion of her Lord's; since her total disregard of him, and home, perhaps, alone directed his eyes to the charms of less chaste, though not less lovely, women; who, fascinated by his exterior graces, first make it fashionable to become his favourite, and then sacrifice themselves to the pleasure of triumphing over their equally assiduous acquaintance.

Had this young lady been better educated, the evil, in all probability, had never happened. Women may not be calculated for those deep studies which give dignity to man: but when they have no resource in the love of reading (which mostly produces, if the books be judi-

ciously chosen, taste, elegance, and sensibility, together with a contempt for those pleasures which neither give rise to, nor will bear, reflexion), they must, of course, snatch at each temporary amusement, with which to beguile the present hour; and pass all those not engrossed by sleep, in contriving how, alike, they can dissipate the future. Of all habits, that of mental indolence is the most fatal, as it is for ever increasing.

Men of literature have, I know not why, thought it right to confine the studies of the other sex within a very narrow compass. Would they wish a wife to have no other advantage over her maid, than a handsomer gown, or a prettier face? Yet these very men are not always proof against the disgust which ignorance induces; and they then, ungenerously, censure the soil for being barren, which they know was never cultivated! Nature and observation may supply all the sense that is necessary to govern our conduct

upon common occasions; but education must quicken and refine that sense into intellect, before life can become enjoyment. It is in the capacity of increasing their knowledge, that the human race is superior to the brute; and the benignant Giver of all good has not restricted that capacity to half the human race!

Without a liberal education, every generous power, and discriminating faculty, must lie for ever dormant in woman: and sensibility (a sixth sense, which at once heightens and restricts the other five) either overshoots itself into weakness, or withers in budding; for that must be carefully understood, and assiduously cultivated in the spring of life, to make it a blessing. In a word, were lovers to examine the characters and tempers of each other, with half the attention before marriage which they seldom fail to employ after it, how infinitely would many domestic circles be improved, to the happiness of individuals and the general benefit of society! A

modern poet, no less elegantly than justly,
says, that,

“ Ev’n in the happiest choice, where fav’ring heav’n
Has equal love and easy fortune giv’n,
Think not, the husoand gain’d, that all is done—
The prize of happiness must still be won!
And oft, the careless find it to their cost,
The lover in the husband may be lost:
The Graces might alone his heart allure;
Those and the Virtues meeting, must secure.”

LETTER VIII.

TO MRS. FORRESTER.

WELL! it is whimsical enough to
hear you complain of my silence, just
after I have sent you a volume; and ask
such a poor vegetating creature as your
Cecilia, for news! How little do you know
the isolated state to which my employ-
ment condemns me!

I eat, and drink, and sleep—What then?

A ---I only eat and sleep again!

Yet I have one provoking piece of news for you, too : I have seen---yes, my dear, since I sent you his history, I have seen this redoubtable Lord Westbury. But you shall have, previously, a curious scene, which led to this. Coming out of Hill-Street chapel on Sunday se'ennight, I found myself close to a lady whom I soon recollected to be our old school-mate, Mary Barker ; who, you must remember, went abroad, with many other misses, on the modest errand of making her fortune. Her equipage, then drawn up, her servants, and her dress, convinced me, by a glance, that she had succeeded. Nor did my appearance, with the lovely children of Lord Westbury in my hand, while his chariot and servants were evidently waiting for us, fail to impress her : she not only greeted me, but with an air of such familiarity and kindness as obliged me to accept an invitation to spend the following day with her in Portman Square. A magnificent mansion, a suite of servants, and all the *et ceteras* of grandeur,

convinced me that Mrs. Bayntun, as the ticket she put into my hand announced her to be, had not gone to the Indies for nothing. I was conducted from one splendid room to another, and another; where the lady of the house flew to embrace her dear, dear Miss Rivers, and present me to her husband and his brother. Mercy on me, my dear! I almost started when I turned my eyes upon the hideous pair!

Our conversation commenced with a long discussion about our childhood; in which I observed that she very adroitly sunk the obscurity of her own origin, and could hardly remember a *quondam* neighbour undistinguished by a title. Mrs. Bayntun then led to an explanation of my present situation, which I made with the proud simplicity none but delicate minds can account for. Alas! poor woman! what a revolution did her features undergo, when she too plainly comprehended that I was only governess to the lovely children whom she had seen with me; and as such, alone, was attended by

the carriage and servants. Most heartily did she regret being misled by appearances to renew an acquaintance with such a nobody. She, at intervals, impertinently surveyed me from head to foot: scrutinised my gown; and, after inquiring what it cost a-yard, conveyed, in her air, a polite astonishment at my presumption in wearing a dress so far above my degree! In short, from the most insinuating and gay manners, she sunk into an indolent gaping fit: walked from the fire, to pinch her geraniums and look through the window; counting, as I am apt to think, the drops of rain which slowly trickled down each pane of glass: and, finally, made no ceremony of owning herself—immensely dull! If Mr. Bayntun could have blushed, I really believe he would; for his heart did not appear to be as bad as his complexion.

You know me too well to imagine that insolence like this could rob me of self-possession. We must be capable of accepting consequence from others, before

they can take it from us: and I was malicious enough to smile at heart, when I beheld the embarrassment and mortification poor Mrs. Bayntun had made for herself. Dinner passed in a grave and haughty style; which was followed so immediately by the coffee, that she inquired why the butler brought it; who answered, that she had ordered it early, as well as the carriage, to go to the play. Mr. Bayntun felt it right to tell me, that she had flattered herself I might find some amusement in accompanying her. At first she would not hear; then blushed; afterwards became pale; and, having given him a look which rendered him a blank for the evening, would have got rid of the subject, had not his brother taken it up. He reminded her that the side-box had been procured with great difficulty; nor would she obtain another during the season, if she gave it up so late: besides, the young lady seemed not to object to sharing an entertainment which Mrs. Bayntun, only yesterday, wished to pro-

cure on purpose for her. You would not think, now, that I had the ill-nature to make an acceding bow. God forgive me! but I did it on purpose to tease her; for I could not but see that her only objection to going was the dread of being seen as *chaperon* to such an insignificant as your Cecilia. Decency, however, precluded her making any further objection; and the carriage being announced, she flounced into it in a noble fit of ill-humour.

To add to her distress, and a little to embarrass me, we found that half of the first act was over; and, by entering so late, we drew upon us both, at least a thousand pair of eyes. Only judge of what they beheld!—the magnificent Mrs. Bayntun, laden with the wealth of the East, following a poor, little, insignificant governess! That my employment was not written on my forehead; and that I was neither ill drest, nor naturally vulgar, alone mitigated Mrs. Bayntun's calamity.

I had hardly recovered the confusion of our noisy entrance, before I heard the name of Lord Westbury whispered from one brother to the other, as they sat behind us. I eagerly inquired which was that nobleman; and both stared to find that I lived in a house without ever having seen its master: they told me that he sat next but one to me, in a box nearer to the stage, which was wholly filled with gentlemen to support the new play; and that his younger brother was at my elbow. Now cannot I help smiling, to think how you will be disappointed, as I was before you, when I add that I saw nothing interesting, or characteristic, in the hero of my tale—he was only just not ordinary, nor ungentleel: and, vowing to myself never to trust in the partial judgement of an old woman again, I now surveyed his brother George; of whose natural advantages the good woman had made no mention; and her only reason for that must be, that he was not ennobled, except by God himself, for he is among the di-

distinguished beings in creation: never did I see features so regular, united with such variable expression, and a voice and manner so irresistibly engaging! His countenance charms you before you can discern that it is handsome; yet every perfect feature teems with mind. I have seen few men affect fashion in dress who might adorn it, while the plain-featured are often coxcombs. Lord Westbury was of the latter class; but his brother was dressed with modest elegance, and gave, not received, a grace from the clothes he wore. There is a peculiar sweetness in his address, which would almost persuade you that he is unconscious of his personal superiority; yet, surely, in that case he must be more than blind. However, when Vanity is veiled, we can always support her; it is only her bare face which we cannot tolerate: and we see so many people outrageously vain, without any pretension, that we now only wonder when we find any favourite of nature not obviously so.

Mr. Clifford had fixed my attention much more than the play; when the sudden slapping of a box-door near us, caused him, unluckily, to turn his head so abruptly, that he caught me in the very act of contemplating his features. Never shall I forget that moment! I wished that the earth could open to hide me: and my distress was so obvious, that it doubled the awkwardness of my first fault. Nothing could be more evident than that he amply returned the attention which he had excited, for his eyes seemed from that moment to have no other object. A deadly tremor ran to my heart; I felt so conscious, so ashamed—and all for what? merely looking upon a man whom I was not acquainted with! while I saw half a dozen other women stare at him without being in the least disconcerted.—Surely I am a mere rustic after all! To complete my absurdity and vexation, I now dropped my fan; and, in stooping for it, brushed the feathers in my head against his hair: he made a thousand apologies for an inadver-

tence he could no way have prevented, while I looked like a fool, answered like a fool—in short, I even now blush to remember it.

Mr. Clifford shortly after took an opportunity to address Mr. Bayntun; and, avowing an interest in the welfare of the author of the play, besought both brothers to join him, and his party, in supporting it. From the ladies, he added, he should ask only smiles; and of those he perceived his charming neighbour was very sparing. The ice thus broken, he continued, occasionally, to address me; and the judgement which marked his every sentence, rendered my replies so vague and irrational, that he must either think me mad or stupid.—Never did I appear to so cruel a disadvantage.

The solicitude which Mr. Clifford expressed to obtain Mrs. Bayntun's approbation of his friend's wretched comedy, brought that lady into good humour; and I scarcely could believe the play was really over, when the curtain fell. The officious

boxkeeper informed Mrs. Bayntun that her carriage stopped the way: and nothing could induce her to stay the after-piece, because it was not a harlequin one, as the ignorant mortal called pantomimes in general. O how vexed was I at her vulgarity and obstinacy! Mr. Clifford rose when we did, though in another box; and as I passed very, very near him, he softly sighed. He was so close that I almost started: it seemed as if I had never heard a sigh till that moment;—alas! it is too sure that I never felt one! He followed almost immediately, I fancy, for I saw him at a little distance in the lobby, speaking to a boxkeeper—about us, I doubt not, for his eye pursued the party intently.

I was now dragged back to a tedious supper at Mrs. Bayntun's; and when, at length, her coach and two flambeaux were ready, returned to Lord Westbury's house—ah! how changed from the being I was when I left it in the morning! Dissatisfied with my own conduct, without

knowing in what it was censurable; shrunk at once into nothing; how cheerless, how solitary, appeared an apartment which, nevertheless, abounded in every convenience of life! My heart sunk under a weight which I foolishly fancied society would have lightened;---in a word, I wept abundantly, and then retired to a bed which gave me not the relief of rest.

The mean-minded Mrs. Bayntun was revenged; for most heartily did I repent having assumed an appearance incongruous with my real situation. Should I, by any chance, meet Mr. Clifford in this house, how will he be shocked to recognise, in the object of a respect so profound, the humble governess of his brother's children! I am covered with blushes, though alone, at so mortifying an idea. I have yet one way left to save my pride and recover my self-command---I will shut myself entirely up, both from his sight and that of every other person;---yet would I rather be degraded in the eyes of the whole world than in those of Mr. Clifford.

I forgot to tell you that Mrs. Bayntun, when I bade her good night, with a most forbidding face pressed me to visit her often. I replied, that, in my situation, it was impossible to form many engagements abroad. She coldly added, that she hoped, at least, to see me whenever I had leave.---Leave! my dear.---She treated me, you see, as an absolute servant.---Mean creature! I am determined never more to cross her threshold, however.

Here, then, am I---restless, uneasy, impatient; seeking him whom I dare not desire to find; wishing for what it would be madness to hope. O my dear Amelia! it is you who must tell me if these are the symptoms of that fatal passion which is destined to destroy the happiness of so many women, and to form that of so few. But to this you cannot, happily for yourself, answer; since your love endured not constraint---contended not with inequality. I sit all the morning, eagerly listening, with my door open; yet no sooner does the most distant ac-

cent reach me, than I fly to shut it, and hide myself in my chamber!

Sometimes I am in a dreadful alarm, lest you should have accustomed Mr. Forrester to peruse my letters: never more could I resolve to behold him, did I think he were apprised of---what shall I call it?---my egregious folly.

Thank heaven! I am, Mrs. Ellison says, in no danger of meeting this irresistible Mr. Clifford; for he very seldom comes to Lord Westbury's. I am not surprised to hear this, for the house seems to me the very Cave of Trophonius. Ah! how different might his presence make it!--But what is he to me? I have asked my heart this question as often as you could desire, my dear; but I can obtain no other answer than a sigh! However, I am determined, from this moment, to go to work very busily, and think no more of beaux, plays, pride, poverty, grandeur, and sighing: so commend your

CECILIA.

LETTER IX.

TO MRS. FORRESTER.

YOUR letter of yesterday astonished me, my dear. Is it possible that you "should be alarmed at my situation?" Can you fear that my discretion should fail in the first instance in which it has been tried? O my darling friend! think better of her whom you say you love! Though I may, perhaps, sigh at my fate, never shall you see me disgrace myself or the ashes of my father! You tell me, that you know my frame of mind too well to think it capable of a slight attachment. You do, indeed, know it well!--a single hour confirmed the powerful impression: my heart seemed to blend at once, with that of a stranger, in the confidence of a long acquaintance. But what of that?--he is far removed from my sight, and exists to me only in imagination. Mine, I will frank-

ly own, is full of Mr. Clifford. Is it a crime to think of him? to repeat that single name a thousand times a-day to myself, and find, or fancy, a charm in it which no other possesses? to recall those brilliant eyes, those fine features, to my memory? to hear a voice which my mental faculty alone retains? What farther consequence can result from my prepossession in his favour? He is far beyond my hopes, and will only serve to guard me from all other men. Rely on the candour of my nature, my dear; and till you find me write obscurely, or sink into silence, forbear to distrust me. God forbid that I should ever find reserve towards you necessary!--- Nor is it likely that Mr. Clifford should even remember me: that evening, the distinguished one in my life, brought nothing to distinguish it in his. I never yet captivated by my person; and was not mistress enough of my mind, to strike through that medium. I have seldom made a hasty impression; and on such a man it is absurd to suppose that I made any. My only

merit is good temper; and my only charm youth. Oh, my dear! that one evening taught me the hard, but useful, lesson of humility!

I have not been able to sleep, for pondering on your letter; and rose early, that I might answer it at large. Shall I own, that it is the only one from your hand I ever received without pleasure?---But there is something in your apprehensions---prithree spare them, my dear. I am, after all, I fear, a proud fool; since it is plain that I cannot bear to be lectured by any body but myself.

However, to prove that I am not inclined to indulge my foible too far, I must inform you that I pleaded indisposition, when desired by Lady Westbury to take the young ladies to see a new dance at the opera, which, in a fit of good humour, she had promised them. Lord Westbury and Mr. Clifford were both, as Mrs. Ellison told me, to come to the children in her box. O how my heart sprang to my lips at the proposal! Yet, had he known

me, how humbled must I have been! and the same, perhaps, if he had not. Nevertheless, to confess the whole truth, I have repented the self-denial ever since.

How vexatious is this! when I had set my heart on writing you four sheets, Lord Westbury (troublesome man!) has just sent to request that I will bring his daughters to breakfast with him in his library.--I dare not refuse; but I shall look cross enough, if it be only to prevent his teasing me, in this way, any more. It is too early to give me the most remote chance of meeting his amiable brother.

Amelia, to how singular a fate is your poor friend destined! On entering the study, Lord Westbury, who was sitting, in undress, by the fire, reading, only turned his head carelessly;--judge what passed in my soul, when in him I beheld his supposed younger brother!--every sense seemed imperfect, and the surrounding objects swam before my sight; insomuch, that I feared I

should sink at his feet. I recollect nothing but his confusion, which seemed not inferior to mine. He started forward--took my hand, and, placing me in the chair he had quitted, attempted an apology for sitting still when I entered, but the imperfect sentence died away upon his lips--perhaps from a consciousness of its impropriety. He then hesitated something of good fortune in accidentally obtaining a pleasure which he had sought in vain from the night of the play; but, dropping his fine eyes, he left that alike unfinished. As to me, who seemed half petrified, and every thing but a statue--I, at last, was obliged to utter something. What has escaped my memory--a speech foolish enough, I dare say; for I am afraid I shall never breathe a word of common sense in his presence;--I could hardly suppress my tears, and felt sick at heart. He turned his attention to his charming children, and a little relieved me. Lady Henrietta having climbed his knee, and thrown her arm round his neck, told

him to love her governess; "for she was very, very good-natured; and would love him, if he behaved well." He gave her the softest penetrating smile, and fixed on me those "eyes of dewy light."

The servants now entered with breakfast; in preparing which, I found some employment: though a wretched figure I made there, too; for I either allowed him no sugar, or was sure to give him a double quantity. But, convinced of the necessity of conquering my feelings, I made a bold effort, and at length obtained the appearance of composure. Lord Westbury was perfectly himself:--the same indescribable air of sweetness animated his features, and elegance his mien. Those eyes!--how is it possible that nature should contrive to add to his beauty by hiding their exquisite lustre? yet never did I see a countenance expressive of the benign superiority which he assumes as often as he drops them.—When he is silent, I could contemplate him for ever, as one would a perfect picture; but, whenever he

speaks, the harmony of his voice, and the power of his understanding, make you forget that he is handsome; and the fear of not replying properly, gives one such a deadly sickness, and perturbation!—I feel it now, while only recalling the situation to my memory.—The dear little children were absolutely enchanting; and their father is extravagantly fond of them: nor am I much less so. “You have the office of a parent early to fulfil, Madam,” said Lord Westbury; “and none can ever show a lady to more advantage;—yet, without the tie of nature, to enter so feelingly into its duties”—“Oh, my Lord!” returned I, “make some allowance for the difference of children:—what a heart must that woman have who does not delight in these!” He half-lifted his eye to a beautiful whole-length portrait of his lady, with a tacit reproach, and said no more on the subject. This stupid answer of mine was only one of a hundred I made in a single hour; and will serve to show how little I could collect my ideas.

To my great surprise, and, I thought, his too, Lady Westbury entered, in a *robe-de-chambre*, and as beautiful as an angel. “How do you do, my Lord?” cried she, half opening the door. “Ah, heavens! here I meant to frighten you; and you have absolutely scared me! What! have you got the whole nursery about you?”—“Yes, Madam,” returned he, coldly rising to make way, on seeing that I did: “I am endeavouring to supply your place.”—His lady hummed a tune; threw herself into an arm-chair; and, beckoning her younger daughter, “Mercy on me, Henrietta!” cried she; “come hither: why, my dear little babe, they make an absolute fright of you!—Miss Rivers, never let me see her in a cap at all; much more, such an odious thing as that!—Louisa, let me look at your stays—Big enough for me, I protest! Send for the staymaker, pray, Miss Rivers; and let her have a smaller pair immediately!”—“In my opinion, Madam,” said my Lord, “you will injure the dear child’s form, to

confine"—“ Oh ! if you like the office, pray, my Lord, manage these particulars yourself: but, till you do take the reins of government into your own hands, I won't allow a girl in leading-strings to be made as big as myself!”—“ As you please, Lady Westbury,” said my Lord, with such a cutting coldness as froze me, though it did not appear at all to affect his wife. He then walked to the window, and remained there, playing with a ring, or some other trifle, without taking any notice of the various directions which she thought proper to give; till, finding me about to take my leave, he turned towards us; and, after kissing his children, requested that I would always allow him the same indulgence, in making his breakfast, and bringing his girls to partake of it. I had no voice in the matter; so I courtesied, and withdrew; leaving the noble pair to quarrel, I have not a doubt; for both seemed very much inclined to do so. In truth, the assuming air with which Lady Westbury affected to direct me, shocked

and hurt him ; who is perfectly sensible, that superiority of rank can never be too much forgotten by the possessor, when those whom he addresses appear alive to it.

Ah, my dear ! a moment of ignorance has shaken the peace of my life !—Why did I confide in the information of Mrs. Baynton ! who blundered, respecting the brothers, only to persuade me that she was well acquainted with two men of fashion whom she had hardly ever seen before ?—Will nothing but experience, painful experience, guard us ? Whence can the slightest gesture, word, or look, acquire such an influence over the soul ; diffuse such a tremulation through every nerve ; and rise for ever on the memory, without its being fatigued with the single idea ?—Yet, how frank are the manners of Lord Westbury ! how generous his sentiments ! how superior his soul ! how dignifying the deference with which he treated me !—I am compelled to tell myself a thousand times a-day, that he is married : and that to cherish these recollections,

will stamp me with guilt:—but they will not, therefore, lose their influence;—his image overpowers my tears, and shines, like the rainbow, through the shower!

Yours, &c.

LETTER X.

TO MISS RIVERS.

IF your Amelia's peace is dear to you, my sweet girl! return hither with the utmost expedition! fly from a spot which will otherwise be the grave of your happiness!—fly from a man too seducingly dangerous to dwell near with safety!—But I know all the delicacy of your soul, and will not further urge your departure. Oh, my Cecilia! you know not the many heart-achs that your last letter has given me!—it is impassioned in spite of yourself; and yet I can easily discern, that, animated as your language is, you have not ventured to show half the ardour hid in your

heart. Do not be offended. What, but the love which excuses my interference, could cause it?—By that love I conjure you to yield to my request, and without considering how far it is reasonable. You no longer possess the perspicacity which, till now, distinguished you :—passion throws a false shade on every object ; and the one nearest the heart is that it can least judge of. “His deference, his sweetness”—Oh, my dear ! I fear Lord Westbury is not the elevated character you take him to be ! He has looked into your innocent soul, and assumes the appearance most likely to win it :—he is too successful—is he not ?—Answer truly to that question, and you will see, with me, the necessity of retreating. A delicate nature can only be betrayed by its own feelings ; but an artful one ever knows how to bring them all over to itself. Let not Lord Westbury refine your sensibility to your destruction ! Do not think that word too harsh : it is the duty of a friend frankly to admonish ; and fatal is the situation of

her who rejects the dictates of truth and affection, because they oppose a prevailing inclination. You know not the sex: all men, my dear, are selfish; and few scruple any thing to gratify their liking. Lord Westbury will recollect that you are sensible of his situation; and the smallest indulgence on your part encourages him to a crime.—Can Miss Rivers for a moment allow herself to think of a married man?—one whom at any time she could not hope to unite her fate with!—Will it not be inferred, that her prudence died with her father?—and can my Cecilia support such an inference? May she rise superior even to malice; receive this caution with kindness; see the propriety of following it; and retire, with the applause of her own heart, and the admiration of her Amelia's, to the humble, but happy, habitation, from whence this letter is dated, by

Her affectionate

A. FORRESTER!

LETTER XI.

TO MISS RIVERS.

I HAVE sent my letter off in a violent hurry, and now fear it is too pointed. I have shed many tears while only thinking of those which I shall oblige my Cecilia to shed.--Alas! that the wounds of the heart should require caustics!--yet that is the only remedy which can prevent their enlarging. Forgive me, my dearest; and think that I can never know a moment of peace while you stand on the brink of a precipice.--I am busy airing your room, for I am determined to expect you. Mr. Forrester will not suffer me to drink tea in the new arbour, till my friend is of my party: he adds every thing that affection can dictate.

A. FORRESTER.

LETTER XII.

TO FRANCIS TREVILIAN, ESQ., EDIN-
BURGH.

London,

MAY all the joys that matrimony can give, be thine, my dear Trevilian, and with the least possible alloy! Little would it have added to thy pleasure, to see me like a frozen Russian;—which I must have been, after peregrinating from one kingdom to the other in such weather:—and all for what?—to behold thee swallow a matrimonial pill!—bitter enough, however gilt. Raw striplings, indeed, take it for a sugar-plum; but those unfortunate fellows who have once gulped it down, know, though fair to the sight, it is a very Sodom-apple—all dirt and ashes. Whence comes it, that youth only decides on every object with unlimited confidence? Or, rather, whence is it that time so cruelly clears up the mental perception, and, just when the knowledge can but add to our plagues,

informs us, that those actions had their origin in folly which we thought at the moment dictated by Minerva herself? I would wish you married, but that, poor devil! the misfortune has already betided you, for recalling all my blunders so forcibly to my mind; since it must be owned, that I did not take more pains to get a wife than I have since taken to forget her; and the world will tell you I have succeeded as well in the last effort as the first.

I shall not venture to question your rhapsodies about the inimitable talents of your Fanny. Heaven forbid I should ever be seized with such another fit of the heroics!—No, no, my worthy friend! I am brought to reason just at the age that sets so many a-madding: and, if induced to make another choice among the fair sex, and permitted to render it legal, defend me, Cupid, from a wit or a beauty!—one brilliant distinction in a woman is an absolute annihilation of all the virtues and feelings which alone can make home happy!—Give me, therefore, a mistress

rich in every excellence, or unmarked by any: the first character must be superior to vanity; and the last, below it. "This is rare reasoning," you will say, "with a cool head and a cool heart; but, when once both are touched, theory and practice differ more in this case than any other." I allow it, Frank; I allow it. Did I not frequently, after I had put on the chain, forget that it was one? Have I not, with a lover's fondness, contemplated those bright eyes, which owed their redoubled radiance only to a lucky card? Nay, have I not listened long ages to discussions of hands that she had lost or won with, till Hoyle's whole jargon has been exhausted, and my temper with it? How often has she then thrown herself into a passion, and quarreled with me for not being in one to please her! Can you wonder, if, disgusted with conduct so unworthy, and struck with a coldness at her heart, I have, at these moments, looked through all the outward graces of form, feature, and complexion, into a nature to-

tally unlike my own? How could I avoid disdaining the selfish woman who claimed my participation in the most paltry pleasures, without condescending to yield in any one instance essential to my happiness?

I know the world has conceived a strange idea of my character, from conduct which I yet think very reasonable. Half my acquaintance censure me for neglecting the most charming of women; and the other half laugh at me for idly indulging her. These opinions are alike ill-founded. Yet it is fair, perhaps, that the world, to which I gave her up too early, should punish me for doing so. It is alike fair, perhaps, that I should punish her, for preferring her vanity to every other passion. Enraged at times with my indifference, Lady Westbury complains to and of me in the most vehement manner; nor can be persuaded to think herself happy, because she has lost the power of making me wretched. She shall not, even by this, drive me to any extreme. I

make it a point of conscience to bear with her, for her father's sake, who loved me far more than my own ever did; and when I cannot excuse her fault as my wife, I forgive it to the daughter of my venerated Leslie. He sought not to ensnare my youth—all pure and noble was his soul: I chose, I would have her, whom I now am obliged to consider as my punishment, instead of my blessing!—This long discussion will, I should hope, acquit me of the charge of inconstancy. When a wife has no other virtue than chastity, a husband may surely be pardoned who regards the preservation of that rather as a proof of pride, and love of herself, than him. It must be owned, that contempt has so totally routed affection in my bosom, as to render every chance *tête-à-tête* with Lady Westbury, beautiful as she is, no less dull and insipid, than if she were a dowager of threescore, and I a fortune-hunter who had married her for her swingeing jointure.

To play the fool once, however, among

the women, was not enough for me—no ; I am at this minute the news of the day. The ridiculous refinement of being beloved, haunted me still ; and soon enslaved me to a tyrant of another stamp ;—but I have broken with Lady Killarney, and for ever too. You shake your head at this, well knowing how often this resolution has been vainly made ; but, then, remember it was only by her—now it is mine, and not to be broken : and yet, would the plague have been at peace, I would rather have gone on quietly with her, than have had my heart thrown back on my hands. What provokes me is, that I know she loved me. She sought me ; she even made her devoted attachment too apparent for me to misunderstand her. She was young ; admired, though not handsome ; rich enough to choose : I could not but be flattered ; and she was soon won. Delighted to find any woman impassioned and sincere, after my matrimonial disappointment, I vowed everlasting love ; but, as she had not the pre-

caution to make me, at the same moment, vow everlasting patience, we quarreled every other day. Extravagant in all instances, she made her predilection as public as the noon-day sun; and, having sacrificed her reputation to please herself, exacted more assiduity from me than if I had obliged her to do so: haunted me in public; engrossed me in private; watched me at every interval of separation; and poisoned all the favours she bestowed by the most universal jealousy:—it was so general as to comprehend even my wife. Disgusted and wearied to death a second time, I found that there is no tie with the sex which a good-natured man can break when he pleases; and, perhaps, no torment woman can make us know, like an ill-governed love. However, I made the best of her untoward humours; and lived like one of Madan's happy fellows—a slave to both my real wife and my voluntary one. Who would have thought that you would enfranchise me from the last?—That letter you enclosed for me

to give Lady Beresford, did the deed. Your fair one valued her reputation, and was silent : but my tyrant noted the whisper ; misinterpreted the confusion ; and fell, or pretended to fall, into such hysterics, that the opera-house rang with her cries, before we could carry her out of the box. For my own part, I had no patience, but vanished ; leaving her to the care of coxcombs and women. She sent me a most furious epistle, commanding me never more to approach her door. I took her at her word, and kept within my own ; from whence, in a few hours, every artifice was tried to draw me : but I had made up my mind ; and though her physician came to let me know that she was dying, this made no more impression on me, than the news that she married Fitzmaurice that very evening—purely out of revenge, I am persuaded ; as I had once told her, that, of all the impudent fellows in love with her fortune, he was the most interested. Either by fair or foul means, however, he

has carried off his fair prize for her native country; and relieved me from a malicious spy on my every action: not to mention, that her precious spouse is as jealous as a Spaniard; and marvelously troubled with that ignorant courage which would whip one's soul out of one's body, and ask why, afterwards.

Once more, therefore, my heart is at home; yes, literally at home, however odd that declaration sounds.

Chance and idleness carried me, with George, who knew the author, to keep up a dull comedy, the other night. Sick of beauty, coquetry, jealousy, and insensibility; and not less sick of the insipid race of females, who so incessantly haunt public places that they seem, like their gaudy resemblances the flowers, to vegetate every season on the self-same spot; I paid little regard to my neighbours; till, by some accident, I turned hastily round upon a pair of intelligent eyes which had been doing me the honour to make me their object. The sweet girl blushed with

a modesty and sensibility that rivetted my attention. I had often met the litter of East Indians with whom she was surrounded, but not herself. Without any one very fine feature, her face interests and engages you; and her complexion, free from all modern improvements, expresses every emotion of her soul. The great personal advantage she possesses is that on earth most pleasing to me—a form so exquisitely just, that the satisfied eye says, this is symmetry!—that fine finish, without which beauty is unaffecting, and with which plainness of feature is almost forgotten. Yet there is a something in such distinguished beings more touching than even symmetry;—I mean, when the mind seems to diffuse itself over the perfect figure, forming a warm and variable grace, the pure result of sensibility! Prepossessed by this exquisite charm in my unknown, I sought occasion to address her, and soon found it. She replied in a voice so sweet, and language so elegantly proper, that my beating heart

every moment attached itself more strongly to her ; when her humdrum companions obstinately dragged her away. I hastened after, to see if I knew their livery, and to learn their names from the box-keeper. She turned her head, and, perceiving me, drew her hood closer ; as if eager to conceal, perhaps, that I was the person whom she sought. I supped with our old set ; but, wholly unable to join in their gaiety, hastened home, and got to bed at an hour which I should never have thought of had not you been wife-hunting. Having imagined myself into a glorious dream, I was roused by such a cursed rapping at the door, that I thought Lady Westbury must have been brought home dead, or dying ; and rung a peal in a moment ; when I had the satisfaction of learning, that this uproar was caused by my daughters' governess, who was just, truly, come home from one of her parties ! I laid awake the chief part of the night, imprecating curses on the conceited tabby at intervals, and at others meditating on this

nameless charmer. The following days I ran the whole round of public pleasures. Having understood, from her conversation, that my unknown was not familiar with them, I flattered myself, that, like other country-ladies, she was in full chase of the sights of London. At every place I encountered her swarthy friends; but not a glimpse had I of the fair one. Weary of the search, and completely out of humour, I sent, a few days after, for my girls to breakfast with me, in hopes their prattle might drive away the spleen: they came—a hand of each in one of that very girl whom I had been so vainly seeking!—Confused, delighted, astonished, I made a mighty foolish figure, I fancy. She was no less surprised, I verily believe; for, by some odd chance, I am sure I was as much a stranger to her as she could be to me. After some little time had been lost in adjusting our blushes, we entered into a rational conversation; and that sweet voice once more vibrated to my soul!—What an accomplished creature did I find

her!—Blest with a heart which nature had refined, reading cultivated, and reflexion matured; yet so unaffected, humble, and modest, that she blushed if I but looked at her. My soul expanded, and grew light as air; when, just as I had led her into informing me that she was the orphan of a clergyman, while the whole of her interesting history hovered on the verge of her lips, and my heart upon the verge of mine, Lady Westbury abruptly entered, and disconcerted both; bantered me, catechised her, found a thousand faults with the dear little ones; and, by every unpleasant air, made me guess at her errand. Perhaps, in her whole life, she never so much disgusted me. Who, that had seen her throw the evidently-superior Miss Rivers at so great a distance, could have imagined it possible that they were born equals!—Not having been troublesome enough before Miss Rivers retired, immediately afterwards she teased me for money; and, being unwilling to have a violent quarrel, I gave her

a sum that I could ill spare. My pleasures fortunately are not so expensive as hers at any time; they now are confined to this house.

Yours, &c.

WESTBURY.

LETTER XIII.

TO MRS. FORRESTER.

London.

THIS morning's post brought me a letter, dated Sunning, and signed with the name I best love in the world. Alas! could I ever have thought that I should know a letter of my Amelia's only by the signature!—even yet I have not recovered the surprise, the shock, it gave me. Ah! where is gone at once the reliance she of late had in the rectitude of my heart!—where the confidence due to my past conduct!—where, too, all the delicacy of her own nature!

O that I had hid, in my own bosom,

its softness—its alarms! then would it not have known a wound yet deeper: but I laid its failings open to my friend, as to myself, and she probes it in a merciless manner! No, Amelia; my prudence did not die with my father; nor will any other being on earth venture such an inference!—But I forget: I have, all my life, been mistaken in my own character—you have, it seems, seen me in a just light: but never till this moment did even you draw aside the veil which self-love throws over our failings. It is only at this trying moment that you represent me to myself the poor creature I appear to you;—unsteady, vain, the ready dupe of a gay deceiver, and the fool of lightly-conceived fondness! It may, indeed, be so: I will admit all that makes against myself; but depend on my expecting equal concessions, if my conduct should amply refute your opinion.

In the freedom of friendship you judge me, perhaps, severely enough; but how is it that you venture to be still more severe in speaking of a nobleman whom, it is plain, you never saw, or you could

not so speak of him? From what part of his conduct do you pronounce Lord Westbury so meanly, cruelly selfish, as not to scruple any thing to gratify his liking? O how odious a word, too, is that from a woman of your delicacy! But be at ease, my dear: I may not be the object of Lord Westbury's liking; nor is it possible that my peace, or honour, could ever be endangered by such a species of partiality. His Lordship is too justly sensible of the respect due both to himself and to an unprotected girl under the shelter of his roof (but how should I flatter myself you will believe these assertions?) to violate decorum or hospitality. There is nothing marking in his manners, but that flattering and unremitting attention which is as often produced by good breeding, as a softer sentiment. I see him only one hour in the day; and during that hour both are in the observation of a train of servants, and surrounded by his children. I must be an idiot, to renounce such a situation from any vain surmise on my own part, or overstrained apprehension on yours.

I enter into this explanation, notwithstanding all the tears your letter has caused me to shed, because there is a generous solicitude in it that ought, perhaps, to qualify the harshness: but, indeed, indeed, Amelia, I find it hard to believe that it is an epistle from you which occasions me all this suffering; or that with so much affection you grant me so little esteem. You, in turn, will call me, perhaps, capricious and unjust; but my very soul overflows at receiving its first humiliation from one so infinitely valued. You shall learn, however, to estimate me more fairly; you shall find that I can continue in this grave of my peace, without its becoming the grave of my honour. The superior nature of Lord Westbury, it is my fixed opinion, will set him above the attempt; but, whatever may be in the bosom of futurity, you have roused my pride, and I will dare the danger.

I met Marianne a few days ago, and brought her home with me. She is charmed with my situation, and too late laments the slavery she has imposed on herself.

She gave me such an account of my aunt's whims, as must reconcile me to every other inconvenience of situation. As I went half way down stairs with her, we met my Lord going to breakfast: he receded, and pressed her to walk into the library, which is a beautiful room. Although she complied, I could see that she was quite uneasy, lest my aunt should miss her, and be outrageous at finding that she took notice of such a low-minded creature as myself. Lord Westbury offered her his carriage, then in waiting; and was very much at a loss to account for the suffusion which his great politeness caused in the cheeks of both sisters; but was too delicate to press a proposal apparently distressing, and permitted us to part our own way. Whether curious to learn how two so nearly allied came to be so differently situated (for Marianne was elegantly undressed, and followed by a servant), or for some reason unknown to me, he, by detaining his children in his arms, obliged me to outstay the breakfast and servants; when, with the

happy delicacy peculiar to himself, he turned the conversation on his own early days; and thus naturally giving me opportunity to speak of mine, he comprehended, in a moment, that it was a spirit of independence which alone prevented my being with my sister. He said little; surveyed me attentively; sighed; and a generous glow coloured his cheeks, as if he found in my nature a similitude to his own: each then engaged a child, to detach our thoughts, or rather our eyes, from the other.

The admiration my sister had expressed at seeing Lord Westbury's sumptuous library, led me to lament the loss of my father's: I was, therefore, less surprised than delighted to see him present me a key—"a duplicate, made," he said, with a sigh, "for a lady who had never taken possession of it." He then, most politely, added, that, in a situation so secluded as mine, books were an indispensable indulgence; though, had his advice any weight, I should neither do the world the injustice of taking it upon trust, nor oblige it to do

the same by me. "Study," added he, "was intended to elucidate observation; and while we peruse the essence of whole ages condensed into a few admirable volumes, it would be unreasonable to speak of our present circle of society as frivolous or contemptible. But ladies," he elegantly observed, "were never designed for lives of intense application;—the first was created as a companion. When once we set little value on the beings with whom we must, nevertheless, pass a considerable part of our time, the desire of pleasing, which often gives the power, and ever adds to it, languishes; and our felicity decays in proportion. Trust a little to my judgement," concluded he, "and see, my dear Miss Rivers, if I cannot reconcile reason and pleasure." I answered, that, "were my rank in life such as would render our duties, or our pleasures, in any manner the same, I should prefer his judgement, perhaps, to my own; but, when I considered how wholly distinct we were in society, I should not suppose

that he would charge me with presumption in preferring my own to his. That my father had early taught his children to derive every enjoyment from the heart ; and such pleasures as that affords, were often lessened, but rarely increased, by the splendor of high life, or the bustle of public places : yet, far from being a cynic, I condemned no human being for following his, or her, peculiar inclination, if within the bounds of innocence ; since I had no other rule for my own conduct. It was true, that, like other vain wretches, I sometimes flattered myself my system was the most rational." He smiled, and replied, that, "in affecting to differ from my judgement, he should impeach his own." And, with this compliment, we parted.

What is there in all this so very dreadful !

I find the indulgence of admission to such a collection of books, a felicity indeed ! It is true, that I could have recourse to a circulating library : but I am, you have often said, an absolute coxcomb

as to books ; and can hardly gather either information or entertainment from one with a dirty cover, a vile paper, or a horrid print. Judge, then, of the satisfaction with which I turn over Lord Westbury's. All the authors are as elegantly bound as chosen. He has, likewise, enriched most of them with marginal notes, in an exquisite hand. O sweet and judicious pen ! able to give such life to the sentiments it perpetuates, that they are indelibly impressed on my heart, even when those of the author are forgotten !

Amelia, I would in vain dissemble with you, or assume the language of indifference. There are moments---yet I weep while I own it---there are moments when reason and philosophy desert your poor friend, and leave her heart overflowing with a criminal passion, and a yet more criminal accusation of the heaven that ordained it should be so.

Pity and pray for your Cecilia ! she will never be wholly unworthy your true sympathy.

LETTER XIV.

TO MRS. FORRESTER.

I AM surely another creature, and not the Cecilia once so beloved. If I was offended at your remonstrances, I am afflicted at your silence. Alas! does my heart's first, dearest friend, reject, renounce me, for an involuntary error? Is my becoming unhappy to cancel my claim on her affection? Ah! rather my dear, my ever dear Amelia, confide in me still! continue still to love me! I may yet, perhaps, regain your esteem, by conquering the fond weakness that has robbed me of it. Alas! while I flatter you with the hope, I feel the impossibility. How is it in nature that I should even attempt to quench the æthereal spark which at once illumines and endears existence!--which gives a charm to affliction itself! Deadening my sense to all common habitual pleasures, it reserves to its

own mysterious influence the creation of those I shall henceforward know ; giving them all an interesting and endless variety--a variety only to be equalled by its pains ! Nothing, then, remains, but to ensure my safety by flying from the object so adored : shame, sorrow, ruin, and love, would not then always unite in my ideas. Were you to witness the effect of these cruel conflicts, I cannot but believe that even you would weep for me ; since, surely, in my circumstances, hypocrisy is virtue,--it ought, when it costs me so much to assume it. Yet, alas ! I fear, I fear the veil is too thin ! I fear Lord Westbury is not blind to his own influence ; while that I have, I know not how, obtained over him, is every day more decided. We understand each other's eyes too well ! I see him, however, struggle with his weakness, as I do with mine ; while not one word does he utter to which I can except. A conduct so refined becomes my affliction. Were he once to be rude, haughty, presuming, my virtue and my pride would revolt at

once, and I think I should even learn to hate him. That tender deference, on the contrary, that eloquent silence—alas! they penetrate my very soul! enfeebling all its nobler faculties. You will hardly be able to read this;—it is blotted by the most impassioned drops that ever fell from my eyes.

I am half tempted to burn this true, but dismal, picture of my heart; but my integrity forbids me: shall your Cecilia say one word to herself she dares not repeat to you!—first, shall she indeed be altered!

How can I avoid meeting him at breakfast? I am so situated, that the will of others over-rules my own; yet, surely, Lady Westbury should feel the impropriety—it is her duty to give charms to the home of her Lord—it is her interest to be sure that no other woman does so. This hour of dangerous intercourse perpetually recurs; and he always knows, too, how to detain me, after the servants leave us, by detaining the children. My Lord has dis-

covered that I have a taste for drawing; and it seems to have revived the exquisite talent which he once cherished. What fancy, what genius, is to be discovered in every thing he has attempted! yet he says all the sketches he has here, are mere daubs to those he will show me at Arlington: a saloon there, adjoining the conservatory, is fitted up with his drawings; and he is sure I shall be fond of sitting there. Alas! he may, indeed, be sure of it! He has the singular art of interweaving your interests with his own; of ingrafting you on every hope--in short, of stealing your very soul. Ah! I shall never be so happy as to visit Arlington!--to sit in that favourite saloon--to copy his drawings, while thinking only of himself!

Yet, in spite of the happiness I enjoy in seeing Lord Westbury every morning, I find the rest of the day insupportably long. I am quite at a loss to imagine where or how he passes it; for he rarely dines at home, and only when he has company. I missed, too, my instrument; and,

knowing that there were two in the house, I hinted to Mrs. Ellison my wish that Lady Westbury would allow me to play on one placed in her *boudoir*; but Mr. Alton, my Lord's valet, so assiduously recommended the organ, in a closet between my Lord's apartment and the library, that I consented to try it yesterday evening. I found, however, little amusement in this, from the fear of being caught; and, giving way to reflexions, in which music, it is certain, had little share, I broke off in the middle of a strain, and, throwing open the door, to return to my own room, ran full against my Lord, who, as it appeared, was just come in, and intently listening. I could have wept for vexation. He rallied himself on the *mal-a-propos* discovery; and, taking my hand, drew me towards the instrument, with, as I thought, more familiarity and gallantry than, circumstanced as we both were, could be right: I therefore snatched my hand from him, with an unusual degree of reserve, apologising for an "intrusion which he, it

was plain, thought it necessary to make me fully sensible of." He smiled, with an easy assurance, and returned, that "he found himself impenetrable to so delicate a reproof, and, like other criminals, should only, perhaps, be hardened by too severe a punishment. But since," continued he, "you have intruded into this forbidden ground (though by whom forbidden I know not, since, if you do not shut me out of your apartment till I exclude you from mine, we shall agree admirably), you must not hope to escape without a fine." "What does your Lordship mean?" cried I, with a blushing, indignant embarrassment which I am shocked to remember, as it plainly inferred that I thought he meant too much. Yet, let me add, I owe this to you, Amelia: you have poisoned all the pleasure of my life, by the apprehensions with which your cruel cautions have tinctured it. Before your torturing wisdom drew the veil from my eyes, in the certainty that I intended no ill, I suspected none: now I tremble if I but sigh; and sigh again on

finding how I tremble. I exhaust myself in arguments for or against a courtesy, a complaisant expression---nay, even a look. I pass one third of my life in laying a plan of conduct, another in acting contrary to it, and the last in arraigning and condemning the two first. Ah! deplorable is the state when we can no longer please ourselves!

But I have wandered strangely from the point. I meant only to tell you, that my foolish speech caused Lord Westbury to pause; and at length he returned---“What can I mean, Miss Rivers, but that you must purchase your freedom by such another song;” adding praise too extravagant to be repeated, though too sweet to be forgotten. Alarmed to find myself alone with him, and not less fearful of appearing to dread being so, a faint negative hovered on my lips; but I wanted courage to pronounce it; while my complexion, I doubt not, underwent a variety of changes. He, I fancy, perceived my irresolution, for he became importunate;

and, having dragged me to the instrument, rang for more lights. You may guess at my performance, when I could neither discern a key, nor utter one clear note. Had not habit directed my fingers tolerably right, I should have completely exposed myself;—bad enough was my song at the best. My Lord touched my hand, in correcting me when quite out; and, somehow, I fancied his trembled no less. With his usual delicacy, he kept the servant in waiting, to light me to my apartment; thus rendering it apparent that our meeting was short and accidental.

This morning he began again to speak of music: said that it was his passion; and as even Lady Westbury was partial to it, he hoped his girls would have the same taste. “Why, I can play already, papa,” cried Lady Louisa.” “And I can sing,” rejoined my heart’s darling, the little one, “if you will let me put my arms round your neck, as I do round my dear little governess’s, when she teaches me.” “Oh, pray do!” cried her father, laughing, and placing

her on his knee. "And now, Henrietta, for your very best song." The angel lisped out, most sweetly, the air of, "How imperfect is expression!" while a delight so exquisite beamed on the face of my Lord, that I could have wished the pictures of both to have been taken at that very moment. "And now, my Henrietta," cried he, "if you give your dear little governess such a pretty kiss as this, she will, perhaps, teach you to play it." Away flew the charmer to me, and, climbing up my knee, executed her commission to admiration. I perceived, at once, his generous wish of conducing to my comfort, in procuring me an instrument; while, by all he said during the stay of the servants, it could only appear as if his daughters' improvement was the object.

On returning from our walk in Grosvenor-Square, I found, that, during my absence, a very fine instrument had been sent up to the young ladies' apartment; and know not why an attention so delicate should displease me; but I regarded it with

ill-humour. Alas ! I could only sigh and weep. I had rather owe a favour to any other man than Lord Westbury, since at those moments I most feel my weakness and my inferiority ;--and yet, ought I not rather to admire his watchful consideration !

You may send me some of my music-books, however. I shall, perhaps, grow reconciled, in time, to the painful sense of obligation.

LETTER XV.

TO MRS. FORRESTER.

I THANK you affectionately, my dear, for your last ; but pray take no further trouble about my music-books : I am provided with more than I can want for a century. On the evening of the day I last wrote to you, I heard a gentle rap at my door, shortly after their maid had put the young ladies to bed. Concluding it to be Mrs. Ellison, who is

mightily afraid that I shall pine to death in solitude, I opened the door, cross enough at heart to be so interrupted: but judge of my perturbation when I beheld Lord Westbury there, laden with music-books! A delicate sense of propriety gave, I am afraid, a very sensible coldness to my manner, when I assured him, "that attentions of this kind rather oppressed than gratified a mind duly turned." Without appearing to notice the purport of this speech, he replied, that he should have been utterly unpardonable in his own eyes, if, knowing as he now too well did my incomparable talents, he had suffered them to want the means of exertion. He told me further, that, being convinced my scrupulous decorum would prevent me from ever again resorting to his apartment, it became absolutely necessary that he should complete the furniture of mine: "And all I ask," continued he, "in return, is now and then to be allowed to study expression from its most perfect mistress!" While yet speaking, he had

placed a music-book on the stand; and having struck a few chords, to learn whether the instrument was injured by removal, he took my hand and drew me towards it. You will tell me, I ought to have denied him;—I have told myself so a hundred times: but how was that to be accomplished? While debating what was best to be done, my knees, I fear, had unconsciously relaxed to a slight courtesy: I felt myself impelled by an influence too mighty for resistance; and sat down. You must once more be in love, ere you are sure that you could have been more decided.

How sweet would be this intercourse, were it not for the double apprehension both of Lord Westbury and the world! Yet I have, apparently, little reason to fear either. Mrs. Ellison, discouraged by my cool refusals to associate with her, no longer invades my retirement: I never taste supper: and from the moment that the young ladies are put to bed, seem as safe from all observation or intrusion, as if buried in a desert. Yet, if he should be

found with me!—That dreadful if, embitters the most exquisite pleasure my heart can ever know. I cannot conceal from you that this encroachment of Lord Westbury's continues—that still some new music accompanies the visit; some touching conversation relieves the music. He is an adept in the science of music, and sufficiently skilful in the art.—Then his sentiments—how do they dignify his rank!—and how exquisitely does his person adorn both!

You will call this mere madness; I call it so myself: and every morning make a vow, I every evening as constantly break!—for I cannot muster courage to open my lips on a subject that might unseal his; at least, I have made this excuse to myself for being silent. And, then, of what can I complain!—Have I any right to shut a door in his own house on its master?—especially when, far from encroaching on my indulgence, he never, by a look or word, breaks through the boundary of decorum, or deviates from that

refined politeness which seems on all occasions the invariable rule of his conduct.

* * * * *

Your sister sent me a pressing note to go with her to Lionel and Clarissa. I was obliged to mention this slightly to my Lord in the morning, lest he should encounter his children's maid in my apartment, should he pay it an evening-visit. We went into an upper box; and Mr. F. quitted us, with a promise of coming to convoy us home. I somehow fancied that I should, in the course of the evening, see my Lord; and eagerly watched the opening of every box-door. The first act was almost over, when I perceived him conducting to her party a very beautiful young lady, whom the persons around us pronounced to be Miss Dartford. Every eye in the house seemed to do homage to her charms! I saw those of Lord Westbury fixed on her, and felt a pang so disagreeable, that I only wished it could be at the same moment mortal. The party

filled the seats in the stage-box, and my Lord remained standing: he was, as usual, very plainly dressed; yet who, of the many around him, could be compared with him for dignity of mien! I thought no more of the play till my attention was recalled to it by your sister; but it no longer supplied me any amusement. I charged myself with ill-humour and caprice. What excuse had I for being offended at the distinction Lord Westbury gave Miss Dartford, when I dared not for a moment wish myself its object! She was his equal; and to her, his attention was an honour; while to me—oh! how bitter were the tears which followed that thought! A tender interest in the opera at length withdrew my reflexions from myself. “Is it criminal to know the most lovely, the most amiable of men, and not be insensible to his merit?” said an elegant actress. I applied this, I fear; for, by an involuntary motion, I turned my eyes towards Lord Westbury, and met his intently fixed on me. Both bowed: and

whole ages passed away ere I ventured another glance: but still I found him intently regarding me. Thus satisfied, at once, that his remaining at a distance was a compliment rather paid to my situation than his own, my pride was soothed, and my heart overflowed with softness and gaiety. The actors, the audience, the whole world vanished from before me! I saw nothing, heard nothing, thought of nothing but Lord Westbury! The surrounding objects had yet the advantage of protecting me from the sense of error, which I am but too sensible of whenever I am alone with him; and seemed to acquit me to my own heart, which often condemns me as severely as yours can.

Mr. Forrester appeared not, and the performance was at an end. We learnt from those about us, that the night was rainy, and neither coach nor chair could be procured. This dilemma would have been very embarrassing, had not my Lord foreseen that it might occur; and, hastening

to their carriage his fine party, he flew round to seek me. He would not hear Mrs. Forrester's excuses, nor assurances that her good man would certainly arrive, and be distressed at missing us: snatching a hand of each under his arm, he hastened us to his chariot, and declared that he would take his own chance. I was not less vehement in declaring that he should not do so; and at length he consented to, as he termed it, incommode us. Did ever moments pass more pleasantly! Soon, however, were they over; and we stopped at Mrs. Forrester's door. He leaped out, and, having conducted her in, returned for me: drawing my hand through his arm, he raised it, unobserved, to his lips, and left on it a sigh!—Ah, what a sigh!—We were happily obliged to separate ere my trembling hand could tell him what passed in my heart.

I had not, all this time, been mistress enough of my own mind to recollect the danger to his health from encountering the elements. Heaven has punished me,

by making him a severe sufferer: he has kept his bed one whole day, and his room two more; nor know I when he is likely to quit it. Have I not ample leisure to fret myself to death, think you? thoughtless idiot that I was! I am grown very alert in my visits to Mrs. Ellison; who, to do her justice, is a watchful nurse. I take pleasure in assisting her in preparing jellies and other trifles; and only regret that he does not know how sorrowfully I am expiating my fault.

All the world come to inquire for him; the knocker never rests. His friends are admitted to visit him: I alone—well, it must be so; and He who ordained it best knows why. Adieu! I am peevish beyond expression.

LETTER XVI.

TO FRANCIS TREVILIAN, ESQ.

London.

SO ! in your infinite wisdom, Frank, you suspect mischief to be going on here, by my silence ! What a fine thing it is to be just married ; and to have laid in, at such a cheap rate, a large stock of virtue to bestow upon our friends ! 'Faith, I know not but other sermons might be as impressive as yours, did other culprits make as full a confession of their faults as I do to the preacher. Now own at once, that, if I had not pointed out a text, the homily you have just treated me with might have been as perfect a soporific, as those compressed in the well-bound volumes, from whence the reverend dulness of this age, modestly pilfers the reverend dulness of the last.

"Cruel ! base ! ungenerous !" say you ? How so, my sage confessor ? But remem-

ber the fate of your fraternity, if they betray the secrets of their cloth; and dread to be worse treated than a king-killing Jesuit.

So you know, then, my charmer? Yes, I think that is plain; for one must know a woman, to feel so warmly in her cause: and yet, did you know Miss Rivers, you would draw your sword, as well as your pen, for her defence. One person, it is plain, however, you do not know; *i. e.*, your *quondam* friend. When have you seen me capable of a mean design—a licentious pleasure? When did you find me delight in inflicting, voluntarily, one pang? The little libertinism that mingles in my character, springs rather from situation than temper; and my heart incessantly demands a mutual tender satisfaction in its pleasures, not more incompatible with purchase than seduction. That I most passionately love this sweet Miss Rivers, my ungovernable heart every moment testifies, by throbbing to my fingers' ends, and making its mark in

every unequal stroke of my pen: but, as to a design, I have blundered on thus far in life without one; nor have I now a new plan in contemplation. To gain upon, perhaps to win, my charmer, can hardly, I think, be termed any thing but the natural consequence of a mutual attachment. That I seem in a fair way for this, I will not deny: the only difference between her mode of loving and mine is, that she slowly steps, shivering and shrinking, into the stream into which I plunged so boldly that I find no effect from it but a delightful glow!--Yes; I can perceive her modest eyes, when they meet mine, now more and more sink before them; while on her cheek softly rises the richest crimson that gives motion to her heart; and then, if any chance blesses me with her hand, oh! how sweetly does it tremble!--the electric fire passes as instantaneously through my whole frame!--The dear disjointed conversation we daily hammer out, while our every idea is engrossed by the only subject which never escapes

the lips of either, is the sole delight of my life!--a delight far beyond any I have hitherto known, as refinement of soul now gives poignancy to the impulses of sense. My languid nature once more recovers its true bias, and turns with disgust from the dreams of fashion and folly which I have, for a few years past, indulged in.

Yet do not, from aught I may say, reflect, for one moment, on the lovely Miss Rivers. The interviews I have mentioned are involuntary indulgences, every one of which the dear primitive charmer grudges me; but, if I can charge myself with any art, it is in continually interrupting that interdiction which she as continually meditates.

Then she plays and sings!--Did you but hear one strain of hers--only, "Ah what avails this sweetly solemn bower!" you would, notwithstanding your friendship, be tempted to rival me: yet she only utters the music of her heart, and her organs do it ample justice. I have heard

the most celebrated singers; but tones so silver-sweet and touching never reached my soul through my ear: these are breathed, too, with such simplicity, that you would think she never had studied a rule, while, at the same moment, her exquisite performance proves that she has no more to learn! How did I bless the fortunate moment which brought to light her talent! for vainly, till then, had I studied in what way I could obtain any intimate intercourse with her: this is now on an easy footing; her fears and her reluctance by degrees subside: in fact, she, I believe, dreads the world, rather than me. How, indeed, can she shrink from a tenderness that assumes her own purity whenever she is present!--Should she, Frank, indulge in time her own heart and mine; should she fall--fall! did I say?--should she rise rather, and dare to be happy in defiance of opinion, for that nominal advantage which it is not in my power to give her, my heart, my honour, my fortune, my every thought and wish, should be hers! Can this deserve

bitter philippic? I dare not examine, for I never shall repent.

Yet, even to avail myself thus far of her generous predilection, I would scorn, were I otherwise situated. The woman to whom I can once resolve to give myself, I shall always think entitled to whatever else I have to bestow; and with what rapture should I add to a merit so distinguished that title which is now a mere memento of my boyish folly:—since, then, I have only a heart to offer, it is my turn to become the person obliged.

Miss Rivers sees, feels, knows, all this, and has full power to decide her own fate; nor will I actuate her further than I tell you. I seek to win her only by a gentle approach; most happy to obtain her of herself, the willing victim of her own weakness.

Should she, on the contrary, have strength of mind enough to resist her own heart and her lover, must I not adore, as an embodied angel, the woman capable of such an effort, although I lose my

happiness to secure hers? Yes, I have sworn to my own heart, as I now do to yours, that I will make the virtue which passes safe through such an ordeal, the rule of my future conduct; and retreat, while youth yet leaves me merit in retreating, from all the luxurious habits of my past life.

I know not, even now, what I most hope; for I have yet romance and delicacy enough in my own nature, to dread the least want of either in hers:—no fear, at present, heaven be praised! of the dear creature's thus shocking me; for sweetly does the softened glance of tenderness now die away before my animated eyes, and revive again in a blush, through the nice consciousness of impropriety. "Oh! if thou knowest not this, thou hast not loved!"—for the most exquisite charm of true passion springs from blending these refinements with more general vulgar impulses.

Lady Westbury and I have not lived so well together these two years; though,

by the bye, I might have died for aught she cared; as I have but just escaped from a son of Esculapius, who seemed determined not to leave a single drop of blood in my body. My wife looked in upon me this morning; and, abhorring sickness herself, was astonished to see me, while white as my sheets, in so sweet a humour, little supposing that her very follies caused it; for nothing would be more provoking than a sudden reformation on her part just now:—no danger, I think, of that either, however; yet my sick soul has, for this week past, desired impossibilities;—desired her to become Miss Rivers, or Miss Rivers Lady Westbury. Ah! what luxury to be an invalid, if a voice like my charmer's took pleasure in soothing you! if a hand like hers presented the cordial! How often, lying on my solitary, miserable bed, worried to death with the troublesome attendance of my old housekeeper, have I wished to save the object of my heart one moment of shame, regret, or disquiet:—but to compare my

wife and Miss Rivers, is a hopeless, melancholy subject.

The clock reminds me that my beloved is now alone. Let me not leave her leisure to fortify herself against me by the peevishness of a supposed neglect. Ah, no! rather ought I to dread that her anxious, gentle heart will suffer for, and with me: the paleness and languor of a woman is ever irresistible; and I shall soon see whether my sex may benefit by the same advantage.

Adieu!

LETTER XVII.

TO MRS. FORRESTER.

O, my Amelia! have I, then, the mortifying confession to make, that your judgement has proved more true than mine? that Lord Westbury is, indeed, a libertine? and if so (foolish *if*, after my conviction), indeed, a complete one!—

You too plainly perceive that demonstration can hardly convince me of it.

How miserable have I been during his sickness! how bitterly did I reproach myself as its cause! I have lived only by pacing upon the head of the stairs, and listening to the opening of his door; not a servant closed it after him, but my heart yearned to utter the worn-out question of "How is my Lord, now?" Mrs. Ellison has found in me a troublesome visitor, an officious assistant.

Yesterday morning he was to go into Hyde Park. I heard him quit the room, without daring to peep over the balustrade, lest he should look up. He descended the stairs slowly. Alas! I fear they have bled and blistered him almost to death. It was some relief to know that he was again in his dressing-room: nor could I (oh, pardon my weakness, my Amelia!) help hoping that he would find the way to my apartment. He slightly coughed in ascending the stairs in the evening, and up I sprang to meet him. My too-

ready feet had borne me to the door of the room, which I hastily opened; but a something, too dear, too heart-rending, to be expressed, silenced me the moment that my eyes met his: I lifted up my hands to heaven, sighed, hemmed, courtesied, and looked, I believe, foolish enough.

Good heavens! how severe must have been the inflammation on his chest! His colour seems quite gone, and he is fallen away in a surprising manner. I struggled to be merely polite; while I assured him, that I should never pardon myself the abuse of his complaisance, if he had any further ill-consequences to fear from it. He half smiled; and said his illness was of so little importance to any one, that he was glad to find in me an exception. Having reached the fire-side, he sunk into a chair, and pressed his hand on his forehead. Forgetful of every thing on earth but himself, I flew towards him, exclaiming, "Oh, God! you have left your room too soon; you are very ill yet;

and will relapse, by thus coming to visit the hateful occasion of your malady!" He drew his hand from his eyes, in which mine suddenly saw such a mixture of love and gratitude, that they sunk before the brightness. "How touching is this generous anxiety, my sweet Miss Rivers!"—"I am sure, if I were not anxious, I must be the most unfeeling, ungrateful wretch existing, my Lord: but to see you thus, and know that my own neglect occasioned your illness"—With this wise apostrophe I broke off, the tears trembling in my eyes. "Yes," sighed he, gazing again intently on me, "you are, indeed, the cause of my illness."—"Owing what I do to your friendship and esteem, my Lord"—"Friendship and esteem," returned he, "I never for a moment connected with the idea of Miss Rivers." Distressed and dubious, I replied, "Nay, then, I have your Lordship's pardon to solicit, for a mistake, which your conduct, and not my own vanity, gave rise to."—"Miss Rivers, my dear Miss Rivers!" said he,

with a pointed expression, "deign to understand that of which you cannot be ignorant. Friendship and esteem are formal, feminine phrases, for feminine feelings. Language does not supply a term to express the sentiments I entertain for you; they comprehend all that is respectful and tender!"—Alas! what an address was this to a soul already so partial! while his expressive eyes pierced, as it were, into my very heart, to draw from that deep repository the fatal truth:—nor was the effort, I fear, vain. I cannot imagine how I looked, for to answer was impossible: when I at length recollected myself, I feared the imputation of vanity, in considering any thing as serious but an absolute declaration; or glad, perhaps, to qualify with my own heart, and overlook what I wanted courage to resent, I faltered out, "You are an adept in the science of flattery, my Lord." He, too, had collected his ideas, and replied, "If you will have it flattery, it must be as you please."—I turned to the instrument,

and touched the keys, to get rid of a yet greater danger. He rested his head again on his hand, and observed that it had never ceased aching. I flew to him with Eau de Cologne, my usual specific, you know. He assured me, that the only way to give efficacy to my remedy, was to apply it myself. I saw him so weak, felt so anxious, was so afraid of being prudish—in short, I poured the liquid into my trembling hand, and applied it to his burning forehead. This seems a mere trifle in narration; yet, at the moment, I could have spent ages in debating what I ought to do, and felt as though my very life hung on the propriety of this little act of complaisance. A profound silence ensued. Lost in thought, he sighed often, and regarded me intently. I took my knotting to employ my hands and eyes, and he the work-bag, as it were, only to impede me. What would have been the end of a scene so extraordinary, it is impossible to guess, had it not been interrupted by a tap at the door. Gracious God! in

what an agony of shame and terror was I! Conscience-struck in a moment, my folly, my imprudence, my love, all, all, were sufficiently punished, in the misery of apprehension! nor had I adroitness enough even to hesitate, or hide him: indeed, where could I have hid him but in my bed-chamber? which communicates with that of his daughters'. Had not terror deprived me of speech, I should assuredly have been found with him; but, sick as he was, Lord Westbury wanted not more presence of mind, perhaps he might be used to such dilemmas, and the expedient he took to save me by no means a new one to him; for, faintly whispering, "Collect yourself, my love, and rely on my discretion," he lifted the damask curtain (which luckily was long enough to lie on the ground), and concealed himself in the space between that and the window. Still I was not able to rise, or utter a word; and, after another disregarded tap, Mrs. Ellison came in. I was sick and pale as death itself; which I was

obliged to ascribe to a book, luckily lying turned down on the table.

“Mercy on me! make yourself sick about a book!” cried the chatty housekeeper, drawing her Lord’s chair closer to the fire and to me than he had dared to do: “but you are the most lonesomest young lady in the whole world, surely” (this good woman cannot think it possible that solitude should afford any pleasure, as silence is to her an insupportable evil). “Why, you look as if you was dead and dug up again. O my conscience! I believe you are fallen in love, and shut yourself up snug here to think of it.”

This observation struck me speechless, from its truth; and the crimson curtain, to which I afterwards recollected my eye unconsciously glanced, was paler than my cheek. I could hardly doubt but that my Lord saw my confusion; and guess whether this thought did not redouble it: in short, grant, my dear, that great as my fault has been, greater yet has been my punishment.

“Pshaw, nonsense! I in love,” cried I, in a manner sufficiently pettish, “that would be a fine jest, truly! How could such a vague notion come into your head, Mrs. Ellison? Who^{do} I see in the house, but yourself?”

“Nay, you do see more than myself, too. How do I know that Mr. Alton is not the happy man? he did so admire you last night, while you was flavouring the jelly. ‘It may well do my Lord good, Mrs. Ellison,’ he said, ‘when the whitest hands in the world prepared it.’”

And now, Amelia, I blushed, indeed! I to have made a conquest of Lord Westbury’s valet!—to have him think I even sought to do so!—to let him understand that I descended to menial offices, because they conduced to his comfort!—O the detestable clacking woman!—Never felt I so little in my own eyes, as at recollecting that I was not entitled to resent this supposition about Alton; and not to resent it, must strike my Lord strangely, thus finely rivalled by his own valet.

Mrs. Ellison, however, resumed her speech, ere I could my presence of mind. "Come, Miss Rivers, you shall go: now you and I have got rid of our nursery, we will have a little pool of quadrille together, I am determined."

"How often must I repeat, Mrs. Ellison," cried I, fretfully enough, "that I hate cards?"

"Hate them or not, to-night you must and shall play! We all wanted, indeed, to go to the new opera; but my Lord stays fidgeting at home, to plague Mr. Alton. I can't imagine, for my part, what whim he has taken up now; but something frets him to a certainty; for nothing I have done has been able to keep him in good humour. Alton says, it is about an old mistress he is worrying himself; but I never knew a man do so for a woman he was weary of. I will warrant his present flame is some low body; for a lady of quality never costs him half so much courting. He is scribbling, Alton says, for ever and amen:--

a most mortal waste he makes of time and ink: now the lady was the scribbler in the affair of—”

Respect for myself obliged me to cut short her speech, at the very moment when I was racked with curiosity: but the apprehensions and feelings that overwhelmed me, are past all description. “Dear Mrs. Ellison!” was all I could utter.

“We are all curious enough, I assure you; for Alton has catechised the footmen, and not one soul can tell how he sends all these here letters.”

“How, indeed, does he send them, and to whom?” cried your poor Cecilia’s throbbing, eager heart: while, I dare say, Lord Westbury almost wished his busy housekeeper choaked with the pinch of snuff she was coolly taking, ere she resumed—

“I must needs say, it is not very handsome in my Lord to manage his secrets himself.”

“Heavens, Mrs. Ellison! would you

wish to be entrusted with a disgraceful secret? ”

“ Hum ! why a secret is a secret ; and I shall always have the more mind to know, what other people have a mind to keep from me : but my Lord is such a fine person of a man that he seldom fails with the ladies : to be sure, you think him monstrous handsome, Miss Rivers, don’t you? ”

This woman was determined, you see, to distract me : here was a blessed question. “ Yes,” at length stammered out I, “ my Lord is handsome, no doubt ; very elegant and agreeable.”

“ Agreeable ! ay marry is he ; and from a boy he was noted for his beauty.---Ha ! ha ! ha ! I guess how it is ; if Alton minded your white hands, you did not overlook his handsome legs.”

Out of all patience at a dialogue which every moment made more distressing, I now started up—“ To convince you, Mrs. Ellison, that Mr. Alton excites no emotion

in me, I will play at cards, or what you like, this evening."

Mrs. Ellison, pleased with my acquiescence, followed me down: and thus was my Lord released from a confinement that will cost me a week of suffering in turn; for I have been ill ever since. Think, that had he once coughed, once sneezed, my character and peace of mind had been lost for ever. It was not enough to vow never more to incur the danger; I could not pardon myself the weakness of having done so.

I was not mistress of my own mind during the whole evening; yet could hardly help smiling to hear Alton, presently afterwards, on joining us, say that his Lord had recovered both his colour and his good humour: in truth, but that the sense Lord Westbury must have of my danger and apprehension, would check the pleasure of his housekeeper's curious discussion of himself, he must have been entertained with all our embarrassed

speeches. As to Alton, I could not think my Lord's mind so narrow, or suppose myself so low in his esteem, as that he should not know I gratified Mrs. Ellison only to shun himself, not to seek his valet: the latter, however, was amazingly flattered with my condescension; and, with the two Abigails, overpowered me with civil things;—Alton is rather handsome, young, and neither illiterate nor impertinent.

Once more alone in my chamber, I took a full review of the past distressing scene; and, though nothing could seem so mal-apropos as Mrs. Ellison's intrusion, I became very thankful to Providence for it. Some answer I must have given to Lord Westbury, had he pursued the trying subject; and how know I whether I should have dared to check him sufficiently! Softened, as I found myself, at seeing him yet unrecovered—disposed, as a woman ever is, to concede where her heart is concerned—by the recollection I have of my delight at beholding him again,

and the overwhelming confusion his indirect acknowledgement produced, I ought to think Mrs. Ellison the best friend I ever met with, and determine to avoid, from this moment, a man so dear and so dangerous. Yet, oh! I may surely claim your pity, or the anguish this conviction occasions! and allow me--yes, still allow me to cherish, as the only means of existing when once I quit this house, the tender thought that I am endeared to Lord Westbury.

So haughty is the sense of virtue in my breast, that scarcely had he concealed himself, ere I wished that he had been found with me--for pride supplies a support when the censures of the world over-punish the failure; but, oh! when a soul, natively noble, errs in the least degree, the secrecy of the fault only doubles the self-reproach, and exceeds all afflictions!

My Lord sent up word in the morning, that the breakfast waited for me and his daughters in the library. I felt it to be impossible to see him, before I had determined my future conduct; and looked so mise-

rably ill, that the servant who carried my excuse would, I am sure, confirm its necessity. The forenoon proved fine, and the physician had ordered Lord Westbury to take the air. I availed myself of his absence, to totter to the library, that I might make a provision of books for a few days ensuing. On lifting down a quarto, rather above my reach, I struck a casket, which opened, in the way to the floor, and scattered over it letters, lockets, bracelets, and other female appendages. I meant only to gather them up, and replace them, when one of the letters, half open, excited a curiosity which I could not resist---for I saw, at a glance, that it was a woman's hand: to read it was, no doubt, a fault; yet, in its consequence, it may almost appear a virtue. I kept the memorable scroll, on the maturest reflexion, that it might serve as a perpetual corrector of the impassioned emotions which I have hitherto vainly struggled to suppress.--Take the copy.

“You have at length, then, unmasked---

base, cruel, ungrateful, perfidious wretch !
 It is not, indeed, your fault, that I was
 not prepared for this last indignity ;--but
 I disdain flattering your vanity, for ever,
 with complaints. I renounce you--to all
 eternity renounce you !--or else may every
 misery you can inflict be my portion !
 Although I think, after your last night's
 unpardonable preference of Lady B——,
 you will never more venture to approach
 my door, I shall spare you--what you
 would never spare me--mortification, by
 telling you, *that*, and my heart, will be
 for ever shut against you.---Happily I am
 above the necessity of submitting to such
 insults ! How often have I pardoned--
 but let me not descend to expostula-
 tions !

“Take back, too, your letters, bracelets,
 and, above all, the odious picture, which
 only reminds me how little your heart
 corresponds with your face ; and remem-
 ber that you are, from this moment, the
 eternal scorn of her whose happiness your
 inconstancy has continually embittered,

and whose health your cruelty will wholly destroy. Adieu, then, for ever, most deceitful of a sex made up of deceit!"

Hardly could I believe this violent epistle addressed to Lord Westbury; but, alas! there were many in the same writing, where his name was mentioned with terms very different. My soul spurned at those; but this billet rivetted my eyes and mind: speechless, breathless, I stood with it in my hand so long, that I almost began to fear he to whom it was addressed would catch me. How could I but sympathise with the wretched, unknown writer!--Alas! it too plainly appeared, that neither rank nor fortune could bind Lord Westbury's light heart, or obtain, for the woman he no longer can love, the cold comfort of being deceived. Waking, as from a horrible dream, "Let me go! let me fly!" cried I to myself: "now I know, but too well, my danger! Hitherto I have imagined the heart of him whom I adored engrossed by a passion as pure and as tender

as my own; but it is evident that he is composed of art; and the refinement of manners, which forms to me his greatest charm, is but a system adopted, and too successfully practised, ere yet I beheld him. Let me then, in time, renounce Lord Westbury; lest, betrayed like this unfortunate lady, while without the worldly advantages which might in the estimation of others save me, as they will her, from obloquy, I waste my youth in sin and sorrow, and my age in repentance and regret!"

While, in bitterness of soul, I half uttered these torturing reflexions, my eyes were unconsciously rivetted on a miniature the letter mentions, which, set with diamonds, lay upon the floor. Alas! it only served to remind me how much it wanted to resemble Lord Westbury. Where were the varying graces of his mien, the lustre of his expressive eyes, or the deepening tint of his clear and glowing complexion!--where, ah! where, his piercing smile!--or where that all enlivening, mellow harmony of voice, which gives

to the perfect whole a beautiful and endless variety!

Tears having taken from me the power any longer to contemplate the picture, I was going to replace it in the case, but, injured by the fall, the painting came out in my hand, and the circlet of diamonds remained empty. Impelled, by a feeling too strong for reason, to keep his little likeness, imperfect as I thought it, I sought excuses to my own heart.---“He values it not,” cried I; “he may never miss it---at least, I shall be far away before he does so;---far, alas! from both his house and his memory. Yes, in thus yielding to my unhappy predilection, I cannot offend virtue!---This little portrait retains no more of Lord Westbury, than angels might wish to retain. How little is the indulgence I dare grant to myself!---Why, then, forego even that little!”---Replacing, hastily, all the other things, and putting the casket on the spot it dropped from, I retreated with the soft step, and apprehensive air, of a thief, possessing an invaluable treasure.

Though I wished the day to last for ever, I foresaw that evening must come, and what to resolve on cost me perpetual conflicts.--One moment I thought it right to receive his visit, and by rejecting all such in future, to show him how fixed were my principles, and how vain his hopes:--but, if his ascendancy over me should become apparent to him during the struggle--Ah, how many ways might he find to distress, afflict, offend me! Conscience! cruel conscience! told me, that I could ensure my own safety only by shunning him at once and for ever. Leaving a letter, therefore, without inscription, on the table, I went down, when the young ladies bade me good night, to visit Mrs. Ellison, who, good soul, seeing me look so miserably ill, shut out Alton, and began to nurse me very carefully. I suppressed the sad throbs of my heart to the utmost; and as, accompanied still by the worthy woman, I returned, at a late hour, to my chamber, complimented myself on my own heroism. Alas! it wholly

deserted me, when I observed, upon the table, a writing-desk, which I had not left there, and a key, with a label terming it a duplicate. In one moment I became sensible of the extent of my error, in setting Lord Westbury the example, and in a manner giving him an indirect permission, to write to me. Mrs. Ellison found me suddenly so much worse, that she would not leave me till I was in bed; nor, to say truth, did I wish that she should, for I was quite overwhelmed; yet I slept not till I had opened the desk, and found the enclosed:

“ TO MISS RIVERS.

“ GRIEVED, hurt, and humbled, to find that I have lost both the esteem and society of the most charming of women, I know not how to remove a displeasure which I cannot reproach myself with exciting. I dare appeal, my dear Miss Rivers! to your own pure heart, if mine has ever deviated from that propriety which it reverences in you. Incapable of either wronging your confidence, or sully-

your reputation, it seems impossible that I should thus, by unnecessary rigour, be deprived of the only pleasure of my life. Reflect, again, on your own conduct, and you will surely think it too scrupulous. Reflect, again, on mine, and I think you can hardly fail to restore to me that little indulgence which alone has, from the hour he knew you, given value to the days of

“Your devoted friend.”

Could I read this unmoved? Ah, no! I blotted, in a few moments, to an unintelligible scrawl, the fairest and most perfect writing that my eyes ever beheld. Yet such, perhaps, was his insidious style to that unknown lady. Alas! what volumes of his correspondence might, perhaps, be collected! The most intolerable of all my pangs is, that, though I know these letters are such as no woman ought to wish to receive, I am grieving that they should ever have been addressed to any other than myself. Lady B-----, too, she may,

in turn, be lamenting my short, and, to her, invisible sway over him.

By this discreet determination to shun Lord Westbury, I may, perhaps, save him from the complicated guilt of deserting another to ruin me. Ah! how many Lady B.'s might he be able to enumerate, were he once entitled to insult me!

It is impossible, however, that I should so suddenly leave Lady Westbury. Yet, while I am in the same house, I shall live in the sound of the voice I refuse to hear. Then, every evening, to be obliged to seek protection in the company of persons so wholly dissimilar in manners and mind; that, however, must be supported, as the least of the many evils attending my present situation. I have persuaded Mrs. Ellison that the air of London disagrees with me; and my looks plainly prove something does. When a little better, I shall address myself, on the same subject, to Lady Westbury. Yet how to quit these sweet children, either, I know not; they wind round my very heart, and my eyes find

charms in their faces never to be found in any other.---Yet will I go!--Am I, at this price, restored to your esteem? Oh, give me all the sweets of friendship, that my soothed soul may never, if possible, think of those of love!

LETTER XVIII.

TO FRANCIS TREVILIAN, ESQ.

London.

SAID I not, Trevilian, that this darling of my heart would come out, on full proof, an angel?---She needs no cold advocates! Still nobly just to others, as well as to herself, she obliges me to adore that exquisite propriety which I cannot but bewail. Vanity could not lull, nor passion seduce, her into more than a mere indiscretion---a shade that heightens the picture.

Even men sometimes know, in a less degree, the severe conflict between honour

and love : but what are our feelings, deadened by custom and our sexes freedom, when compared with those of a young and inexperienced female heart, full of innocent candour, a distracting sense of virtue, and a boundless passion ? We often arrogantly ridicule the weakness of women ; but, in faith, we cause it, by the execrable manner in which we cramp their faculties, both of mind and body, through a mistaken delicacy in educating them : but even, despite of education, when a young creature, with any native energy, is called upon by the occasion, how will her animated exertions surpass the fortitude even of man ; and that, without losing one softer grace peculiar to her own refined character ?

This very charmer would be thrown, I doubt not, into a panic, were a spider running over her robe ; yet has she resolution enough to resist that first impulse of nature which men find, in general, irresistible ; is proof against persuasion ; and, in a word, conquers herself ; which, could Alexander

have done, he might have spared his tears for his other conquests. This tax on our first and most tender feeling, is imposed only on women ; and, instead of wondering that so many fall, we should rather wonder any resist. Mean must be the wretch who denies them a triumph which he never can claim, and they purchase so dearly ! I dare say you never suspected I had so sublime a soul, as to rejoice at my own disappointment.

I availed myself so far of my illness, as to discover all my influence over her heart ; and had nearly brought that to a nice test, when an interruption, too ridiculous to be narrated in the history of so renowned a wight as your friend, threw us both into a distressing dilemma. An ingenious thought of mine, however, saved my charmer's reputation ; which, as I never intended to injure, even if successful, it would have hurt me beyond measure to sully, circumstanced as we were. A curious scene ensued, in which I had the luxury of hearing my Cecilia praise me

almost against her will : and now, sweetly assured of her sentiments, I waited for the next interview with increased hopes, and fond impatience. But I erred in my calculation of her character : the bird, alas ! was flown, and, in her stead, I found this letter :---

“ It is with reluctance I solicit your Lordship’s pardon for an address which the peculiarity of my situation alone could either induce or justify ; but I dare hope that the obvious necessity for this explanation will appear to you a sufficient apology.

“ You have, from the moment I had the honour of first knowing you, my Lord, flattered me with a share of your esteem and society, which, were I your equal, it would be my pride to obtain, and my pleasure to preserve ; but I have not been able to conceal from myself, that, in my humble situation, such a distinction would not only expose me to envy, but is (I hardly know how to express myself) lia-

ble, perhaps, to a mortifying misconception. You will, I am persuaded, do me the justice to believe, that it is a high sense of propriety, and not any little vanity, which inspires these fears. The generosity, the elevation of your mind, the correctness of your manners, leave me nothing to apprehend but from the misrepresentation of malicious observers. I need not point the recent instance which proved you to be no less actuated by the same impression.

“My father left me poor, my Lord, in all things but understanding and principle: to maintain the last, uninjured, I am painfully thrown upon the first. I have reason to recollect, that reputation may be endangered even when integrity yields not; and cannot but reproach myself for incurring the very possibility; but the respect due alike to your character and person has encroached a little on that due to my own; and but too often tempted me to suppress this necessary sincerity.

"I was not born to be the companion or friend of Lord Westbury, and dare no longer appropriate titles which I cannot return. Forbear, then, my Lord, to pass those hours at home which you have for years spent in other houses. Till I am certain of your compliance with this request, I shall be obliged to quit, every evening, the apartment where you have hitherto found me, and mortify both my pride and understanding in the society that prudence bids me choose.

"In the full persuasion that your Lordship will act up to the idea I have formed of your character, by complying with this wish, instead of giving me the painful conviction that I am, indeed, dependent, I remain

"Your much honoured servant,

"CECILIA RIVERS."

What say you, Frank, to this charming girl's charming epistle?—add, or take away, one word, and improve it if you can. Never, surely, was deference more exqui-

sitely blended with dignity, or frankness with decorum ! and, when I recollect that she has no human being to advise with—no monitor, except her own upright heart—how can I but adore her ! Evening after evening have I continued to pay my periodical visit, but in vain. I must allow her to have her own way in this, or punish her and myself alike, by driving her into the company of my servants : and I have not felt quite at my ease since I learnt that my impudent valet has dared to lift his eyes to my Cecilia.—I may thank her letter for that appellation, so suited to the lips of a lover.

My aunt, Lady Sarah, means to be in town in a day or two ; and is impatient to see her two nephews, who were hardly as tall as their own bats, when she left them playing at cricket on the green, and ran away with Sir James Monro. Never has she visited England from that hour ; and now comes chiefly to get acquainted with her own relations, since she has no longer any hope of having children. She

already has an ideal attachment to mine; and, knowing that I married their mother for love, is previously determined to doat on her. Little does the worthy ancient suspect that the country lass, whom she thinks so honoured by my choice, never condescends to be civil to a mortal belonging to me but George; and he flatters her more than her looking-glass.

Convinced that Lady Sarah will, in a week, detest Lady Westbury, I mean to leave her time to make her own discoveries: then, with the sage matron in my hand, will I attack the apartment of Cecilia, to visit, in appearance, my girls. If the old lady takes not a fancy to Miss Rivers, I renounce her; and if she does, how continually may I see the charmer at Lady Sarah's, in a light entirely honourable to herself.—This is a rich thought.

We will leave Lady Westbury to follow her own devices—and even this hardly contents her. To make a fair division of power, is all, however, that I will do: and, faith, when it is vested solely in either hus-

band or wife, we mostly find it in the worst hands of the two.

LETTER XIX.

TO MRS. FORRESTER.

AH! how was my heart touched with that generous apostrophe in yours—"Why has not one of us a sufficiency for both?" I must ever remain your debtor for the boundless confidence conveyed by that animated expression: nor wonder if I envy you for having uttered first what I have so often thought.

My silence proceeded from indisposition; and I was unwilling to assign that reason to you. I fear I have caused Lord Westbury an anxious time, in my turn; for he almost lived at home, and was for ever sending for the children;—most probably either to relieve me from their prattle, or to make inquiries of them as to my health.

There was, however, another probable cause for his remaining more at home:--- Lady Sarah Monro, the only surviving relation Lord Westbury has of the last generation, is come from Scotland, to recognise her nephews. She arrived a day or two after I wrote last. Lady Westbury has been prevailed on to make a dinner, and appoint an assembly for her; and to appear, on the same occasions, at Lady Sarah's; but more than this she declares she will not do, though her stately aunt had brought the Pretender, as well as the whole clan of Sir James's Highlanders; a great part of whom usually surround her. Lady Sarah, Mrs. Ellison tells me, was proud enough before she went to Scotland; and, of course, is not cured of that failing there. It was with some difficulty she got over the humble birth of Miss Leslie; but to find that very lady can hardly tolerate her, must be beyond forgiveness. Lady Sarah, therefore, drives backward and forward here as her nephew's visitor; and rarely inquires

for his wife. My lovely pupils, however, are the joy of her heart ; and well, indeed, they may, for two such sweet creatures I never saw.

Wrought upon, no doubt, by the most partial and amiable of men, Lady Sarah, yesterday morning, requested my permission to wait on her little cousins in their own apartment, and make her compliments to me. I was taken by surprise—of course quite undressed ; and looked sick enough—at least, if I may judge by Lord Westbury's anxious face, who came up with his aunt to present her. What apprehension, regret, tenderness, did his fine eyes express, while Lady Sarah was obligingly inquiring into my complaints ! Tall, thin, and with the remains of a Clifford countenance as to beauty, Lady Sarah has the *hauteur* of high rank ; but it is accompanied with high breeding, and, therefore, never shows itself to those below her.

You know not what I can do when aware of the occasion ; and, having made

up my mind to meet this, I think I was wholly unsuspected by my Lord's aunt, who could not know that the melancholy air, which I was not able to lay aside, formed no part of my natural character.

Lady Sarah was pleased to see my pupils so fond of me, and to find them the dear objects of my attachment. "They wanted a mother," she added with some asperity. My Lord avoided noticing her remark, by playing country-dances to the dear children, who were quite delighted. Once more to meet him, unchecked by fear, unreprieved by conscience--ah! to me, how precious, how sad was the joy! Lady Sarah insisted on it, that I should come, with the children, to pass the next day with her. She would make it, she told me, a family meeting.

Adieu!

LETTER XX.

TO MRS. FORRESTER.

I AM well, my dear! gay, and happy! It is those feelings which, strange to tell, now produce the silence you complain of. Ah! by how slight a transition of circumstances does our fate take a new complexion! and this poor, variable world, from a desert, become a Paradise! Lady Sarah Monro has deigned to draw me forth from utter obscurity, and to give me esteem---distinction! I spend every other day, at least, at her house; where I find, among a few agreeable friends, Lord Westbury always, and sometimes his brother. You would hardly see any difference in my treatment of them. I have so far yielded to the entreaties of my Lord, as again to bring his children to breakfast in the library; and the discretion which marks his conduct, proves how highly he esteems me.

Among the reasons that make Lady Sarah wish me to be much with her, is an anxious charge she has voluntarily undertaken of two nieces of Sir James Monro's, who have been at a private school of high price, where, it appears to me, those ladies have paid two hundred a-year to learn to hide their faults, and put their clothes on in a fashionable manner. The Miss Angus's are, however, daughters of an impoverished Scots nobleman, and co-heiresses of a nabob, their uncle. I cannot but fancy that Lady Sarah wishes Mr. Clifford would choose between them; and as his fortune is bounded, and his habits expensive, I think it not unlikely that he may adopt his aunt's view. Both misses, I see, reckon upon him as a lover, should they deign to smile. These ladies are too old for a governess, and too young to govern themselves;—of course, Lady Sarah wishes me to assist her in guarding them. Their coming out, as it is affectedly called, is delayed, on some frivolous pretence, which puts them out of humour, and in-

creases their rage of flirting. Nor is Mr. Clifford behind-hand in that respect; though, I think, he only laughs at them. I did not do him common justice, in the first account I gave you of the brothers. When Lord Westbury is absent, he appears almost handsome; at least he resembles his brother enough for me to think so. With an understanding he manages so adroitly, that one can never judge of its extent, he possesses the rare talent of trifling with humour and grace: he has a happy volubility, that renders the most common and even trite incidents entertaining: his voice, in speaking, is peculiarly pleasant, but in singing it is very fine---it possesses that middle tone, between the tenor and the base, which you admire so much. Mr. Clifford is either wholly free from conceit, vanity, and pride, or the profoundest hypocrite: in short, he has no art, or he is made up of it. I happened to sit one day between my Lord and his brother; and, as I make it a rule to talk as little as possible to the

former, and the latter was really very lively, I recovered a few of my saucy airs, and began to banter;—but, heavens! how did the tone of Lord Westbury's voice, notwithstanding his having addressed some other person, reprove me! A chagrin, which he took no pains to conceal, made it doubly important for me to remain unaltered; though I could have shed floods of tears, had I dared. This unreasonable jealousy would have shown him to a great disadvantage, on the comparison with his brother, had he not been born ever to excel Mr. Clifford. Although I ventured not to oblige him with altering my conduct, heaven best knows what the prudence of disobliging him cost me!

Lady Sarah came one morning, alone, to visit me; and Mrs. Ellison took the opportunity of waiting on her, in our apartments, to pay her duty, as she termed it. Lady Sarah was heartily glad to get hold of any one whom she could freely question as to Lady Westbury; and, after they had talked over old stories, she sifted

the busy but worthy Ellison, as to the terms her Lord and Lady now lived on. The good woman made no scruple of saying, that they rarely met, except in public—never in one chamber. This discovery has completed Lady Sarah's aversion to Lady Westbury: she suspects, I see, more than she chooses to own; but, I must add, it appears to me without any reason. Imprudence is a fault, I fear, more severely censured in the great world than guilt.

Adieu!

LETTER XXI.

TO MRS. FORRESTER.

OUR happy days, my dear, still continue; though your Cecilia ventures no longer to be gay. Indeed, I have some reason to think that my Lord saw more in his brother's attention than I guessed; and knew him much better. Mr. Clifford has, I have observed, address enough to hide from his aunt, though not his brother,

the sighs he at times renders sufficiently audible to me.

Lady Sarah Monro is distractedly fond of music; and my Lord one day, imprudently, told her that I sung. A party was made in the evening, which, as to music, was charming; but, alas! we had very little harmony among us.---Mr. Clifford sung duets with me out of my book; and his whispers and smiles so totally disconcerted me, from the apprehension of their effect on my Lord, that I hardly knew my own part from his. When, on the contrary, Lord Westbury held the book to sing with me, I was loaded with the encomiums of the whole company; yet a single sigh from him made me unable to reply to them.

Poor Lady Sarah will, I fear, find it as impracticable to marry one brother, as to reconcile the other to his wife; and no profligate ever dreaded death more than this lady the extinction of the name of her house. Lord Westbury, you will say, has two children; but, unluckily, they are both

girls; a misfortune which their aunt continually bewails. Were the patriarchal fashion, of preferring a handmaid, yet in use, Lady Sarah would compliment my Lord with her own daughter, I really believe (if she had one), to ensure the perpetuation of the name of Clifford. Not a day passes without an invective on her part--forgetting her own elopement--against foolish love-matches, and flighty fashion-mongers; which she generally concludes with recommending a prudent choice to those who yet have one to make. Mr. Clifford's words and looks, on these occasions, do not always correspond.

A few evenings since, Lady Sarah made a point of taking her darling little ones to the new pantomime; and I found chance had procured her the very box I sat in, when first I saw her nephews. They both came in; and while one of them was exhausting himself in gaiety and gallantry, my whole soul was lost in a rêverie, of which the other was the sole object:--*then* not to know Lord Westbury when I

saw him!—*now* to see, to know, only him in the world!—How astonishing that the eyes should adopt, the fancy cherish, the understanding adhere to and adorn, one only being for ever!—On the opposite side, with a very genteel party, I recognised, at length, Marianne; and our smiles showing familiarity, Mr. Clifford eagerly inquired the name of my beautiful friend. I answered, that he knew it in learning mine; for we were sisters; and need never have parted, could I have submitted to the whims of an old child, called my aunt; but I rather took my chance with these dear young ones. Having surveyed her attentively, through an opera-glass, he cried out, with one of his usual gay extravagances, “Why, what a pair of unconscionable sisters are you; to engross graces enough, properly scattered, to make half the girls here pass for handsome.”—I could only reply, “That we must never be supposed to hear speeches too fine for answering.”—“This cursed box is so ill-contrived,” exclaimed my

Lord, "that it is impossible to stay in it!" and out he flew. Ah! that I had dared to call him back, and sooth him, by owning the truth, that "Mr. Clifford's merit is, in my eyes, limited to his being your brother!" I absolutely hated that gay flatterer the whole night; and did not speak three words more.

I was almost afraid to see my Lord at breakfast; but he uttered not a word. Silent and thoughtful was I, as he could be. Ere the things were removed, the servant delivered me a note, just brought, as he said. Doubtless Lord Westbury had ordered this the night before; but I dared not ask by what messenger it came, for well I knew the hand, though meant to be disguised. Having opened it, and seeing the footman going, I threw it, with infinite composure, on the fire. My Lord started up with some angry ejaculation; and first traversing the room a few moments, bowed, and abruptly quitted it. Could he have seen the sorrowful eye with which I surveyed the now-consumed

paper, he would rather have pitied than resented my conduct. I have been lost in conjecture ever since on its subject; for surely something more than common alone could induce him to break through the rule I had laid down, and by which he has hitherto religiously abided:--perhaps--but it is in vain to distract you with guessing, as well as myself.

Not a line have I had since; though, certainly, he might find means to address me when he is not present. Perhaps some of the anonymous ladies are appeased. Oh! by the pang that thought gives my own heart, I can guess at those I am obliged to give his!

I will never be civil to Mr. Clifford again.

LETTER XXII.

TO FRANCIS TREVILIAN, ESQ.

London.

AFTER seeing my wishes ripen, almost of themselves, into fruition, my cursed stupid plan of drawing the sweet creature out, has at last, for aught I know, undone me. I am absolutely racked with jealousy and suspense.

Impatient to introduce Miss Rivers to the notice of Lady Sarah, I was hardly able to wait till my wife had disgusted her (though short enough, Heaven knows, was the time Henrietta took!) ere I found an opportunity to bring up the subject. It never occurred to me, that my brother was accidentally at my elbow; or that the warmth of my praises might excite his curiosity. Far from dreaming of awakening the desires of another, I delivered myself wholly up to my own; while his

inconstant eager heart greedily imbibed my impassioned description. Cecilia came, and more than confirmed all I had advanced. Even my aunt, cold and haughty by nature, was conciliated at once by the soft manners of Cecilia. Hardly less fond of her society than myself, Lady Sarah was for ever fetching Miss Rivers. I often passed whole evenings with both, without exciting remark, and lived over ages of happiness in a very, very short period. Cecilia's natural character now took its bent: I saw those gayer tints unfold to the smiles of my aunt, that had shrunk and shut themselves up in my company. Every hour rendered her more captivating---nay, irresistible! The superiority of her air, resulting at once from innocence and elegance, seems to sublime an almost fragile frame; while the delicacy of her mind refines every sentence she utters, and diffuses around her that interesting modesty which has all the charm of bashfulness without its tedious insipidity. Her voice, too, is modulated to such an

exquisite sweetness, whether she speaks or sings, that, even when she ceases, we “think her still speaking, still stand fixed to hear.”

Fool! idiot! must I call myself, not to recollect that fortune had placed my charmer in the only situation where talents so pre-eminent could be buried! Think what I felt, when George burst forth into raptures about her, while I dared not utter one word! He haunted me; he harassed her. At one time I feared it was otherwise;—she smiled so sweetly on finding herself distinguished and admired, that I fancied it was on him: but she knew better than to drive me to desperation; and my irritated soul was appeased by the tears that swam in her eyes whenever they dared to meet mine!

Then her musical genius was adored in Lady Sarah's circle! You know George has in that an advantage of me. To see him lean familiarly over her shoulder; smile, whisper; take the book, and breathe of love—it was a tolerable trial to your

friend ! To crown my vexations, he almost lived at my house ; and had he been a little less lazy, by breaking in on our breakfast, he would have robbed me of the only comfort of my life. Of all beings on earth, he chose me, too, for his confidant ! and I had the happiness of so entirely satisfying him, that the charmer was not to be bought, as, strange to tell, wrought a reformation in him ; and this gay, libertine, young fellow was taken, all at once, with matrimonial qualms ! When I represented the imprudence of marrying in the embarrassed state of his bounded fortune, he silenced me with my own representation of Miss Rivers. I was, at intervals, so intolerably cross, that the sweet eyes of her I love, yielding in soft submission to my tyranny, alone could have kept me within bounds : yet I wished I could have been patient. It was only to allow her to be more acquainted with his loose morals and inconsiderate conduct, and I might be assured that he would fail : but *he* dared take her hand ;

he dared contend for a seat by her; *he* dared to show, in short, a passion cold and vapid to that burning at my heart! The charmer was surely born to work miracles! for her influence over George soon seemed more than natural. Resolved to hope whatever he chose to desire, her indifference he construed into prudence; and her purity refined even him. With a wife of such merit, he now began to calculate that he could live handsomely on an income which never yet maintained himself only. This was precious reasoning! I urged, in despair, her inferior birth (for I was obliged to urge every thing): he shrewdly replied, that he was only a younger brother; and if I gave the title to one no higher born, surely such an accomplished creature could not disgrace the name.

I found, however, that he was discreet enough to write to a friend at Winchester, to inform himself of her father's character in that neighbourhood, and her own general estimation. The answer was to

the honour of both parties. The little rein he had hitherto held over inclination he now relaxed at once, and even besought me to think of a means for him to address Miss Rivers alone; for Lady Sarah had been alarmed at seeing so much of his gallantry directed to a lady whom she never considered as the object of his attachment.

Think of my situation! think that my own brother demanded of me an opportunity to woo the woman I adored! and wonder as long as you please, when you hear that I determined to find it for him: yes, I resolved to leave him at liberty to offer to Miss Rivers, with himself, a name and fortune far beyond her situation or pretensions;---as far, indeed, above her hopes, as it is below her merits. Judge of my esteem for her, when I thought she would prove superior to all those little motives that induce half her sex to sell themselves.

We have reached this point, and tomorrow decides my fate with Miss Rivers.

Should I at last err, and she accept George—why, if it must be so, I will generously endeavour to contribute towards her happiness, from the conviction that it was not in her nature to constitute mine. My heart feels a love so unlimited, as to demand an unlimited love in return: and if any motive bounds that of Cecilia but a sense of purity, I should scorn to be its object.

Miss Rivers is, then, perhaps, to become my sister-in-law. I am afraid I shall never reconcile myself to that detestable title! I am often vain enough to imagine it will never come to this. Yet her unfortunate sex is born to be sacrificed to convenience or appearances; and happiness is often hardly a woman's secondary aim. It is true, my Cecilia has no worldly father, mother, aunt, or cousin, to display the great advantages of a *respectable establishment*: her resolution must be drawn from her own heart; and that appears to me entirely disinterested and noble. Ah! if for me she should

resist vanity and pride, how, by a life of love and gratitude, could I recompense her! Were she able to discern the future as clearly as the past, she would, perhaps, condemn herself to be wretched only to be safe: for wretched, indeed, must a mind so refined and delicate be, with an immoral, sensual, unfeeling man, like my brother. Born with talents for society at large, and a gay disposition that pleases individuals, his nature wants all the interesting softness hers requires, and eminently possesses. Of such is compounded the happiness of home; but that is a place in which George never sought happiness: nor would even the charms of Cecilia Rivers long attach him to it: and, oh! were I to see her whom I adore the wife of a man who neglected her---But she cannot, must not, shall not, be the wife of another!--Tomorrow, at least, will settle that point.--What say I? to-morrow?---this very moment may, perhaps, decide it! She is now at Lady Sarah's. Though I punish myself so far as to be an hour, now and then,

absent, that hour may prove, by some unlucky chance, favourable to George. No: though I allow him to declare his passion, he would be too fortunate might he choose the place and opportunity. Adieu, in haste!

WESTBURY.

LETTER XXIII.

TO MRS. FORRESTER.

YOUR letter, my dearest Amelia! restored me to my own favour. Ah! how pure is the delight, when the heart dares to appropriate the praises of a partial friend! What would become of mine, were it to feel itself unworthy the distinction! Yes; I am indeed flattered, to be thus, however indirectly, led out into the world through Lord Westbury's means; and every attention now shown me becomes doubly dear by the conviction that he causes, he enjoys it. Relieved at once

from that oppressive sense of inferiority, that horror of being detected in any kind of secret intercourse with Lord Westbury, my mind unfolds itself freely, and more freely contemplates his. It is surely a mistaken idea that renders women rather desirous to touch the imagination than the judgement: in the first case, possession must extinguish hope, and love is too often circumscribed within that narrow boundary; but in the latter, passion is for ever increasing, yet in a mild and almost imperceptible manner. Beauties have been adored to distraction and death; but when has a mere beauty been fondly loved through a long life? Esteem, on the contrary, is an inexhaustible mine, producing unlimited treasures: in that the assiduous may still discover new veins, even while the old ones are yet unimpoverished. When so pure a tie binds two faithful hearts together, it cannot but be lasting; since in that sweet reciprocation each has always something to desire and to bestow: for it is a

point to which every fortunate or unfortunate casualty equally leads. When nothing of the first attachment of sense remains, that of mind is only matured. The peace of the woman thus chosen, is bound up with that of her lover, beyond the power of time or accident to break. Deliberate choice, approving reason, ensures the heart beloved, to her who wins it by her virtues. Most happy of her sex! who adds to the dear pleasure of enjoying her wishes, the secret pride of knowing she deserves to enjoy them! Ah! may I dare to trust your flattering prognostics, and hope that this will all be one day realised in myself?

I may well draw a conclusion against the limited influence of mere beauty when I behold Lady Westbury. She came in, exquisitely dressed, yesterday before dinner, at Lady Sarah's; but, as there were no men to flatter her, the glow of her complexion soon faded, her eyes grew heavy, and she was overwhelmed with *ennui*. Lady Sarah spoke very severely

of her after she went away ; and if she has a greater fault than mere vanity, I think she cannot long conceal it from so interested an observer. Lady Sarah did not scruple to declare, that she should be heartily glad to see her stript of a title which she ought never to have had. I corrected my heart for leaping at the thought ; nor dare wish another woman to become guilty, that I may attain felicity. Either Lord Westbury has no reason for jealousy, or has past the point of affection which excites it ; for I never heard him insinuate a word to the prejudice of his Lady's character : the simple fact is, I believe, that he has no cause. Gay, extravagant, dissipated, vain, Lady Westbury certainly is ; but she has no secret correspondence ; is never missing : her husband always knows where to find her, by only considering where the most splendid circle meets, or the highest play is found.

Your last letter gave me a new alarm. Surely you do not allow Mr. Forrester to peruse mine ? I should, I think, die with

shame, were my soul's secrets exposed to any man, however I esteem him ! There are only two beings in the world to whom a delicate woman can ever be sincere on the subject of her heart ; and to one of those, my lips are, I doubt, eternally sealed. Beware how you extend my confidence!--it is the only thing on earth that could make a breach between us !

I can no longer mistake the attentions of Mr. Clifford ; and they double the embarrassment of my situation : yet how can I shun, how silence him, unless he is more explicit ? I often wish either that he had less adroitness, or Lady Sarah a keener perception ; when, of course, I should not meet him so often. I sometimes wonder, too, at the composure of Lord Westbury ; not that his thoughts, heart, or eyes, ever wander from me. Lady Sarah, I suppose, thinks the gallantry of both her nephews general, or such as I ought to guard against.

Adieu !

LETTER XXIV.

TO FRANCIS TREVILIAN, ESQ.

MY Cecilia now, in turn, torments me, by uniformly avoiding George; who languishes to make his declaration. Our first scheme for accomplishing this was rendered abortive; and I dare not let him know that my charmer ever emerges in my house from the apartment allotted to her, lest a thousand jealous fancies should enter his pericranium, and he become a frequent and troublesome visitor.

Speak he shall, for this life I will not long lead! and, when I know her answer, I shall bring her fate and mine to a point: for, oh! I see in all her charms but

“ The proof, and substance, of an inward passion,

“ And the rich plunder of a taken heart!”

She cannot appear without exciting interest; and I may not always bear with the

patience I now do to see the only woman I can love almost snatched from me! Her feminine fears must be conquered by a more resolute effort than I have yet had courage or opportunity to make.—Some cursed interruption!—

George, again!—harassing fellow! I must see him!—so shall not he Cecilia in my house.

LETTER XXV.

TO MRS. FORRESTER.

AH! my dear! would I could take your advice and Mr. Clifford! for, since last I wrote, that has been at my option: nor have I wanted due time to weigh well my answer. On Monday evening this letter was delivered me by the post.

“I know not, my sweet Cecilia! by what misconduct I have incurred a contempt so marked that it should induce you to con-

sign to the flames a letter of which you knew no more than that it had my signature. Perhaps even this may have no happier fate; yet still my soul delights to address you! Although your pride seems carried to the extreme, my love can go yet further,--even to the admiring it! Yes, my Cecilia! though you may despise me for the declaration, I will own I adore you! I can no longer delude my own heart; and I disdain attempting to delude yours!

“ Every way alike unfortunate, you have seen what I suffer from George’s attentions! He importunes me on a subject that distracts me! Yet to supply another with the opportunity of pleading to you a passion but the shadow of my own---Oh! pity him who dares not incur suspicion by declining the most detestable office ever imposed on an unhappy lover! To-morrow I have been obliged to promise to obtain for my brother an indulgence which I would die to ensure to myself! He loves you honourably :---no cruel tie re-

strains the dictates of his heart!--Yet, if you can be happy with him, let not a thought of me intrude.--I will never interrupt your felicity by complaint!--Alas! I will spare you the severe propriety of telling me, that I have no right to complain."

While perusing this incoherent sketch of Lord Westbury's heart, how did mine exult in the dear thought, that I had one pleasure in reserve which I might freely bestow upon him! Mr. Clifford's addresses would at any other moment of my life have flattered my pride, my vanity, my every foible;--but those are now all resolved into tenderness: the hours that intervened seemed the happiest of my existence. Although respect both for him and myself would have equally induced me to decline the honour of Mr. Clifford's hand, yet, I confess, I was not unwilling that Lord Westbury should feel he influenced the decision. How often did I peruse this invaluable note! What

is there in language could affect me like the last line?---Can Lord Westbury then, indeed, love thus generously?---Ah! let me not trust myself with so dangerous an idea!

Yet Mr. Clifford, I knew, was not unconscious of his own advantages; nor would he easily brook a refusal for which I could assign no adequate cause. How, indeed, could I treat a man of rank otherwise than with respect, and even acknowledgement?---it is not in my nature! Women surely arrogate too much, when they slight the offered heart; which, however valueless in itself, is rather to be estimated by the value the owner sets on it, than that they do.

Habituated, of late, to see both brothers constantly in company, I never had past a moment alone with Mr. Clifford; though he has often importuned me to be visible, at some hour in the day, in an accessible apartment: but, being assured from me that I knew none exclusively at my command, nor ever received visitors,

I could not imagine how Lord Westbury was to supply this opportunity; unless by communicating the breakfast arrangement—a secret that I sometimes fancied he carefully guarded.

Yesterday we all dined with Lady Sarah; the children being particularly invited, that they might see the party in their masquerade dresses. Not a few dissertations had occurred on this curious subject. The Miss Angus's being at first determined to exhibit themselves as two of the heathen goddesses, my Lord wickedly proposed getting a third into the party, when they might represent the Graces; and the foolish girls listened to the banter. Something singular they would be; and the only question was, what? I had the good luck to think of Pamela and Philoclea; and Lady Sarah was much amused in studying Mopsa. Mr. Clifford offered to be Pyrocles in the dress of Zelmane; but, on further thought, turning that over to a tall Highland cousin, he chose the habit of a pilgrim. You would

not have guessed at Lord Westbury in the dress of Kate Matchlock! Imagine you see him with a basket full of bottles, and an old regimental coat over some ill-hanging female accoutrements. I never laughed more heartily than when he made his appearance thus equipped; though, till he took his masque off, I knew not at whom.

Before dinner, he gave Lady Sarah the tickets; when, strange to tell! a superfluity appeared. He raved at an old colonel, who, he said, had specified the number when they were first arranging the matter. There, however, was the ticket; and Lady Sarah might do what she would with it. "What think you, Miss Rivers," said that lady condescendingly, "of going with us, and helping me to take care of these wild girls?—for you know we have no Musidorus;—and Pyrocles will only guard his own."—"O! go by all means, Miss Rivers!" cried the whole party; while I, conscious of the meaning of all this, stood blushing like a fool: not

but it was a gratification to join in an entertainment about which we country Misses ever form a high idea. A domino, and hat with a feather, were soon obtained; and I only let my hair fall, to have it more admired than all the fine dresses.

You would find it hard to imagine any thing much more dull than this celebrated amusement. Persons of reputation hardly ever venture to speak; and those who know one another are very few: those who know any thing of the characters they represent are fewer still. We were often forced, not only to insinuate what persons our Arcadian party represented, but to give a summary account of poor Sir Philip's performance: though, really, we were the lions of the night; as Zelmane had an amazing Highland stride; and Lady Sarah was happy to a degree in scolding them all, as Mopsa.

Late in the evening, with a bevy of beaux and belles, Lady Westbury entered; and almost directly unmasked, as did her party. She was in an elegant Circas-

sian dress, and richly adorned with diamonds; which she becomes exceedingly. Handsome women alone can bear jewels; and true beauty returns to them a greater lustre than it borrows. The crowd moved with her; while the chorus of admiration from bashaws, monks, jockeys, harlequins, and devils, lighted up her fine face with a heavenly glow. It is the fashion for beauties, I find, to unmasque; and with a happy policy. How fascinating do they appear to our eyes, after we have seen for hours only hideous caricatures! Our group attracted her at last; and my Lord worried her to death to comfort herself with a cup of *the good creature*, as he termed some Italian *liqueur* which many people readily partook of. She was an age ere she found him out; and then, in a fit of good humour, and for the novelty, she said, took him by the arm, and walked round the room with him. I do not think she knew me; and was, indeed, much too full of herself to lose a thought upon such a nobody. I was so

perfectly astonished to see her carry off my Lord with an easy smiling air, that I remained looking after them while my party walked on. I had then the vexation of finding myself left alone with Mr. Clifford; who pressed me so fervently for a few minutes' conversation, that, knowing it must sooner or later be granted, I thought it vain to deny him; and suffered him to lead me to an adjoining gallery. To do him justice, no man knows better how to make love in a manly rational manner. "In entreating my acceptance of his hand and heart," he said, "he proffered me almost all his possessions; for his estate was small, being only his mother's fortune: nor was that unencumbered. But he had powers of mind (or he was much flattered) yet untried; and some desultory knowledge, that he might coin into gold, if once he had a motive for exertion: and in the home which I might deign to grace, he should require no charm I might not give it; nor should I want a comfort, while he had any means

of procuring it for me. He wished not to be informed by me of my hopes or situation; for on all those points he held it a compliment to the lady he meant to marry, to inform himself from others; and it added to his delight to find that there was but one opinion concerning Miss Rivers." I was extremely perplexed at this address, polite as I thought it. I plainly perceived Mr. Clifford had no way prepared himself for the answer I must necessarily give; and prefaced it with assuring him, that I was neither ungrateful nor unjust enough not to consider his partiality as a great distinction; although sensible, on my own part, of that esteem only which was due to his rank, character, and conduct. I paused: and, with a disconcerted air, which I could not hide, added, that many reasons, no way necessary to enumerate at present, made love, and all considerations relative to it, improper for me. "A resolution against matrimony," he replied, "would be an equal cruelty to myself, and the world; since, to a mind gentle and tender, as mine ap-

peared, the giving happiness must be to receive it." He detained me---urged only for leave to hope, and to avow his attachment: in short, I thought he never would allow me to rejoin the company; which distressed me, for many reasons: particularly lest Lady Sarah should miss me; and find, at the same time, that he was not among her party. At length I got away from him, saying, that the irresolution common to my sex on points of this nature, made me pardon his doubting my sincerity; but he would find, if he ever knew me better, that my characteristic was frankness. On our return to the gay crowd, I instantly saw my Lord; who, though he attempted not to speak, was anxiously observing us. Mr. Clifford had the address to learn from Lady Sarah what part of the room the party had been in; and then said, aloud, how assiduously I had been seeking them all at the other.

Mr. Clifford followed me the whole evening; nor did his repulse appear to af-

fect him so much as my indifference, gaiety, and absence of mind : in short, he certainly perceived some one engrossed my thoughts, and must know that he was not the person. I may wrong him; but I fancied, from that moment, his manners became unpleasant:---I fear he has not generosity enough to value me for my frankness.

Lady Sarah brought me home two hours ere Lord or Lady Westbury returned. I saw the former in eager conversation with his brother in the anti-room, while we waited for the carriages. The good old lady took a very kind leave of me in the coach, as she means to go for the summer into Yorkshire:---great would be the difference in my life, were I to remain here now she is gone.

From that faithful monitor my pillow, I learnt to fear lest my Lord should construe my refusal of his brother's addresses into at least an indirect encouragement of his own: and how, if so, must I have despised him. Any way I dreaded the morning scene, which is ever, on my part,

one of constraint and hypocrisy: but how little did I know the refinement of Lord Westbury's mind? If he has vanity, it is above suffering him to appear vain. Unusually gay and agreeable, he avoided all particularity: spoke not of his brother; nor hinted at aught that might occasion his own enlivened spirits: rather would he choose me to imagine his gratitude, than humble me by an expression of it. Has he lost any thing by this conduct?—Ah, no! Fancy repeats its own effusions every moment in that harmonious voice but too familiar to my ear and heart; and in her mirror I see even him to advantage.

Did men, in general, understand the flattering trifles that influence women of sensibility, how much more dangerous would they become! It is not so much the attentions they show, as those which at times they forbear to show, that sink deepest into the heart; if, in the forbearance, they allow us to discover an absolute suppression of their own wishes,

Happy for the female world is it that they are, in general, "gross of soul," and incapable of the delicacy of self-denial!

In first seeing Lord Westbury, I own I was strangely struck with the graces of his person, and gave way to a weak indulgence of my eyes; for which I have never ceased to reproach myself. I half hoped, in meeting him on more familiar terms, that I should discover such faults in his mind, temper, or manners, as might give me courage to contend with this fond partiality: but so often have we now met at Lady Sarah's without my once observing any thing in his conduct to excite displeasure, that my love changes its nature, without abating its energy; or, rather, a new kind of passion grounds itself in my heart, which I no longer am able to fear. This mild and settled tenderness restores me a command of my own intellectual powers; and rather urges me to a higher sense of virtue, than lessens that I have hitherto had. Even the fatal letter, which eats, like a

caustic, into my very heart, I am often tempted to suppose written by some light woman of quality, who ought rather to blame herself than Lord Westbury. Yet there is an air of impassioned truth in it that shocks my very soul, and draws floods of tears at times from my eyes.

How, alas! am I to propose going from hence? or, having proposed it, how, how shall I accomplish leaving him who rules my very fate?---Leave him!---what! Lord Westbury?---my only delight on earth!---wish to be forgotten by him!---form my mind to endeavouring to forget him!---rob my eyes of their only pleasure---my soul of its only object!---Oh, Amelia! does my duty really demand all this?---The effort seems to me impracticable!---What! never, never more listen to his footstep; catch the distant accents of his voice; or flatter myself that some of those hours of silence and retirement which I spend in weeping over his image, he devotes to mine!

Then these lovely interesting children !
 --Must I sigh no more on their bosoms ;
 or press them, with a mother's anxious
 feelings, to my own ?--too blest in those
 endearments which she who gave them
 birth carelessly shuns, or coldly rejects.

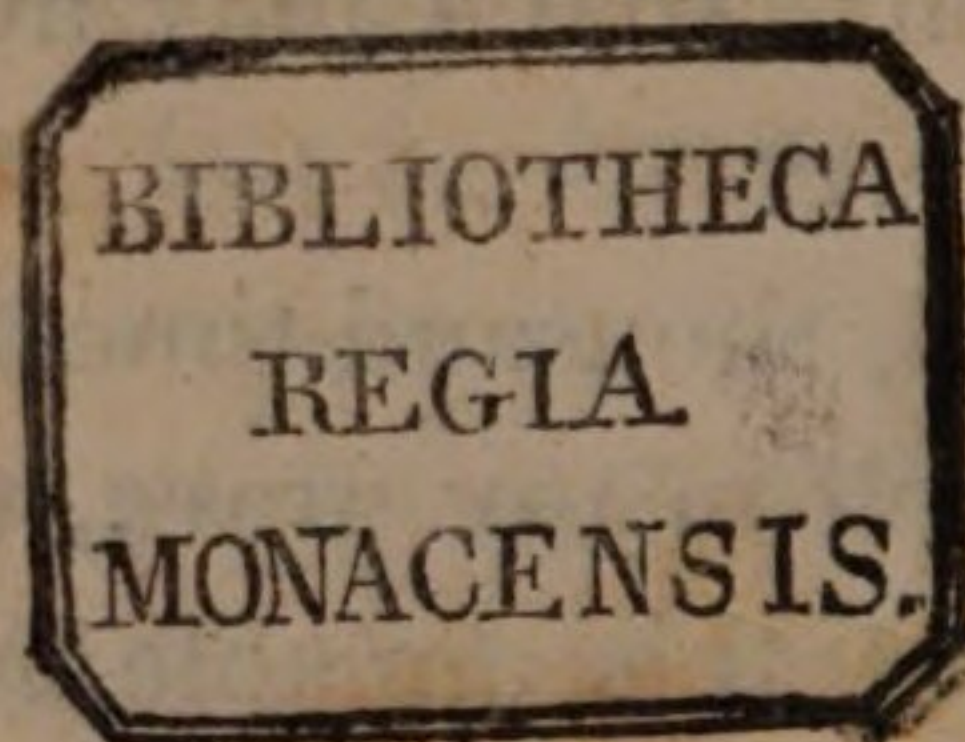
Distracted with my own sufferings,
 agonised at the thought of his, my fate
 seems to enclose me, and I voluntarily
 shut my eyes ; glad, as it should seem, to
 lose the present, that I may avoid consi-
 dering the future.

A thousand, thousand times every day
 do I wish myself in my grave, while I in-
 nocently behold this amiable man ; that
 he, he only might be the last object of
 my failing sight, whose image will swim
 before it whenever the undreaded hour
 arrives !

Oh ! why are you not here, my Ame-
 lia !--Now, indeed, do I want some one
 to interfere, entitled to tear me from him
 --from myself !--a state like mine is not
 long to be endured.

I have calmed my disordered mind, my dear! and will not suffer the infection of the world to poison those pure principles which my lamented father took such pains to impress upon my heart, and which I used to flatter myself he still took pleasure in beholding. Alas! I am ashamed to own, that I have sometimes, of late, rather feared than wished him possessed of that consciousness.

Adieu!



END OF VOL. I.



Lee, Sophia,

The life of a lover in a series of letters ; in six volumes

Bd.: 1

London (1804)

P.o.angl. 203 b-1

urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10747266-1